

OPERATIONS
OF THE
SPIRIT.

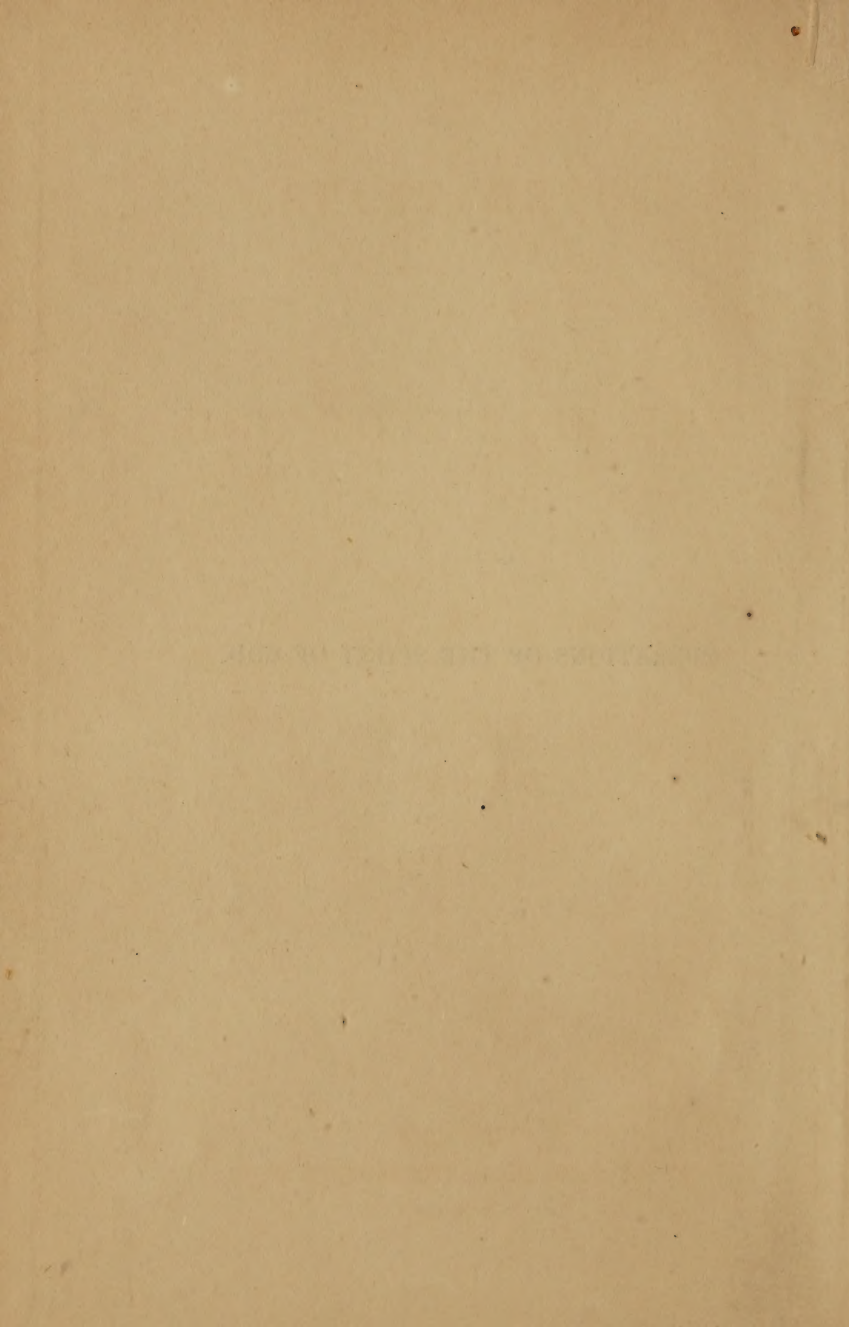
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OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

I WOULD desire to say a few words on the operations of the Spirit of God—the connection of his working in us with Christ; and the separateness too of the operation of the Spirit *in* us, from the work of Christ as wrought and perfected *for* us already.

I do not assume, by any means, to give a full or adequate view of the operations of the Spirit,—“Who is sufficient for these things?” I see enough, indeed, to see the paucity and dimness of what has appeared to my mind, compared with the glory of what is still shewn to be onward. Blessed that it is so—most blessed—eternal blessings! Still I would speak of that which the Scripture seems to make clear. If others have learned more, they can be led forth to communicate it; if less, they will not begrudge what I do; what I hope is, that it may lead into more searching and attainment of the power of these things.

Christians, and real ones, are too apt (though this may seem a strange assertion) to separate, and too apt to confound Christ and the Spirit—that is, they

separate Christ and the Spirit in operation *in* us too much; and they confound the work of Christ *for* us too much with the Spirit. The consequence of both is, uncertainty, meagreness of judgment, and doubt.

The work of the Spirit of God *in* me, in the power of life, produces conflict, labour, discoveries of sin, and need of mortifying my members which are on the earth; and the more what "*Christ is*" is revealed in my soul, in comparison with the discovery of what I am, the more do I find cause of humiliation—the more do I find, by the contrast of Christ looked at as in the flesh here sinless, God condemning this evil root of sin in the flesh in me. And much more, by the discovery of what my blessed Lord is, as glorified, do I see, through the Spirit, how short I am of "attaining," though I may be still changed into the same likeness, from glory to glory. Hence, though at peace, hope, perhaps animating hope, and joy betimes filling the soul, yet there will be exercised self-judgment and sorrow of heart at the discovery of how every feeling we have towards God, and every object spiritually known, is short of the just effects they should produce and call out; and hence, too, in case of any allowance or indulgence of evil, deep self-abasement and utter abhorrence. Hence, when the fulness and finishedness of our acceptance in Christ is not known, anxiety and spiritual despondency arise, and doubt, sometimes issuing in a very mistaken and evil

reference to the law,—a sort of consecrating the principle of unbelief, putting the soul (on the discovery, by the Spirit, of sin working in it) under the law and its condemnation; and not “in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”*

We hear of God hiding his face from us, and the like language, which faith never could use; for faith knows that God ever looks on his Anointed, never hides his face; and if we have such thoughts, they are to be treated as pure unbelief, and dealt with accordingly: every believer must acknowledge that it is not true, if he believe the full and perfect acceptance of the saints in Christ; and therefore to account it true is the lie of his own heart, and unbelief. The Spirit of God judges sin in me; but it makes me know that I am not judged for it, because Christ has borne that judgment for me. This is no cloak of licentiousness. The flesh would indeed always turn it to this—it would pervert everything. But the truth is, that same Spirit which reveals the Lord, who bore my sins, as having

* The Sabbath (*i. e.* the rest of God) was connected with the manna (Christ) sent down. (See John vi.) Conflict, with Amalek at the waters of Rephidim. Every Christian will more or less painfully have to learn his own heart; for that is the separating, sanctifying process. The great object is to separate this from our justification; and that it should be a matter of judging ourselves, not of expecting God's judgment on us. When this discovery of sin in us is made *previous* to any clear knowledge of the work of Christ, it is habitually accompanied with terror or despair—a very intelligible effect. When *after* that knowledge, the sin is perhaps more deeply abhorred; but it is not with terror as to our condemnation, but characterized by a loathing condemnation of the sin itself.

purged them, at the right hand of God, and which therefore gives me perfect assurance of their being put away, and the infiniteness of my acceptance in Him,—that same Spirit, I say, judges the sin by virtue of its character as seen in the light of that very glory; and when this is not done, the Father, into whose hands the Son has committed those whom the Father has given Him to keep, as a Holy Father chastises, and corrects, and purges—as a husbandman the branches. Here, moreover, the discipline of the Church of God, as having the Spirit, comes in:—the disuse and neglect of which has much ministered to the distrust of the full and happy assurance of the believer; for the body of the Church, as such, ought necessarily to assume itself (for such is the portion of the Church according to the word) as a sacred people—a *manifested* sacred people—and then, through the Spirit dwelling in it, to exercise all godly and gracious discipline for the maintenance of the manifested holiness of that sacred people. The Church is the dwelling-place of the Spirit. The Spirit reveals the condition of the Church in Christ, and of the individuals who compose it, (“In that day ye *shall know* that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you,”) and effects, maintains, and guards the character of Christ in the Church in grace and holiness: “Ye are the epistle of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God.” If my soul rests entirely on the work of Christ and his acceptance, as the One who appears

in the presence of God for me,—that is a finished work, and a perfect infinite acceptance,—“as *He* is, so am I in this world:” so that “herein is love made perfect with me, that I should have boldness in the day of judgment.” Now, what men substitute for this, is the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me;—the effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest in lieu of redemption: whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despond when I see the flesh working; and having put the work of the Spirit in the place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished: the *sure* (because finished) resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God. If it be said, “Yes, but I cannot see it as plain, because of the flesh and unbelief,”—this does not alter the truth; and to whatever extent this dimness proceeds, treat it as unbelief and sin,—not as the state of a Christian, or as God hiding his face. The discovery of sin in you, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for doubting, because it was by reason of this, to atone for this, because you were this, that Christ died, and Christ is risen; and there is an end of that question.

But it will be said, “I fully believe that Christ is

the very true Son of God, one with the Father, and all his work and grace, but I do not know that I have an interest in Him:—this is the question, and this is quite a different question.” Not so: but the subtlety of Satan, and bad teaching, which would still throw you back off Christ. God, for our comfort, has identified the two things, by stating “that by Him all that believe are justified from all things.” In a word, to say, “I believe, but I do not know whether I have an interest,” is a delusion of the devil; for God says, it is those who believe who have the interest:—that is his way of dealing. I have no more right to *believe* that I am a sinner, as God views it, in myself, than that I am righteous in Christ. The same testimony declares that none is righteous, and that believers are justified.

I may have a natural consciousness of sin, and a Spirit-taught consciousness of sin and what it is. If I rest in this, I cannot have peace: in Christ’s work about it I have perfect peace. But am I not desired to examine myself, whether I am in the faith? No. What then says 2 Cor. xiii. 5: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith,” &c.? Why, that if they sought a proof of Christ speaking in St. Paul, they were to examine themselves, and by the certainty of their own Christianity, which they did not doubt, be assured of his apostleship. The apostle’s argument was of no value whatever, but on the ground of the sanctioned certainty that they were Christians. But I have dwelt longer on this

than I had any purpose; but the comfort of souls may justify it. It is connected with man's seeking, from the work of the Spirit of God in him, that which is to be looked for only from the work of Christ.

If my assurance, and comfort, or hope, be drawn from the experience of what passes within me, though it may be verified against cavils thereby, as in the first Epistle of John, then it is not the righteousness of God by faith; for the experience of what passes in my soul is not faith. I repeat—that by looking to the work of Christ the standard of holiness is exalted; because, instead of looking into the muddled image of Christ in my soul, I view Him in the Spirit, in the perfectness of that glory into the fellowship of which I am called; and therefore, to walk worthy* of God, who hath called me to his own kingdom and glory. I forget the things behind, and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and my self-examination becomes, not an unhappy inquiry whether or not I am in the faith, never honouring God in confidence after all that He has done, but whether my walk is worthy of one who is called into his kingdom and glory.

But the disconnection of Christ from the operations of the Spirit is an evil, and tends to the same point, though the application be not so immediate.

* Whenever this is not the case, our standard is apt to be—as little of the fruits of the Spirit as we can ascertain ourselves to be Christians by: and then to go on, after the examination, as we went on before, being satisfied with ascertaining *that*.

In the teaching of ordinary evangelicalism, a man is said to be “born of the Spirit,”—its need perhaps shewn from what we are, and its fruits shewn, and the inquiry stated—Are you this?—for then you will go to heaven. These things have a measure of truth in them. But are they thus presented in Scripture? There I find these things continually and fully connected with Christ, and involving our being in that blessed One, and He in us; and consequently not merely an evidence, by fruits, that I am born of the Spirit of God, but a participation in all of which He is the Heir, as the risen Man (in the sure title of his own Sonship), as quickened together with Him—a union of life and inheritance, of which the Holy Ghost is the power and witness.

It is thus expressed in the Epistle to the Ephesians,—“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. And you hath He quickened,.....even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us *together with Christ*, and hath raised us up *together*, and made us sit *together* in heavenly places in Christ.” So in Col. ii. 13: “And you hath He quickened *together* with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” “If ye then be risen *with Christ*.”

The operation of the Spirit of God, while acting in divine power, is to bring us into living association

with Christ. His operation in us is to make good in us, to connect us with, to reveal to us, and to bring us into the power of, all that is verified in Christ, as the second Adam, the risen Man in life, office and glory,—“he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” We are “heirs *together*,” “suffering *together* that we may be glorified *together*,” and thus finally “con-formed* to the image” of God’s Son, in that God “hath quickened us together,” and “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together,” &c. (Eph. ii. 5, 6); and the Spirit of God works in us thus in life, and in service, and suffering; and lastly in glory, in the resurrection of our bodies also.

I would trace, briefly, the testimony of this through Scripture. It may be seen there both individually, and, besides that, also corporately, as in the Church. The Spirit is spoken of first as quickening, and secondly as indwelling. We are born of the Spirit. As regards individuals so quickened, as indwelling, it associates them with the glory of Christ, as it sheds abroad also God’s love in the heart, and with the power of Christ’s life as having eternal life—life in Himself as Son of God; and it also reveals and makes them, according to his good pleasure, instruments of the revelation of his glory as Son of Man;—this consequent upon ascension, as the former is declared and witnessed in resurrection.

The special subject of which He is witness in the

* The word *together* is found here also in the structure of the Greek word.

Church corporately, constituting the Church the present faithful witness, is, that Jesus Christ is Lord, which is immediately connected with the glory, "to the glory of God the Father."

The 3rd chapter of John first brings the subject of the operations of the Spirit before us at large. "A man must be born again," born of water and of the Spirit. But while this is generally taken simply that he must be regenerate to be saved, the passage states much more. He cannot see nor enter into the *kingdom of God*, a kingdom composed of earthly things and heavenly things, of which a Jew must be born again, to be partaker, (however much he fancied himself a child of the kingdom,) *even in its earthly things*, which Nicodemus, as a teacher of Israel, ought to have known, as from Ezek. xxxvi. 21-38; and to the heavenly things of which the Lord could not direct them then, save as shewing the door, even the cross, a door which opened into better and higher things: wherein (as, in the Spirit's work, being prerogative power, "so was every one that was born of the Spirit," and Gentiles therefore might be partakers of it; for it *made*, not *found*, men what it would have them) the Lord declared that God loved not the Jew only, but the world. In this passage itself, then, we have not merely the individual renewed, and fit for heaven, but the estimate of the Jew, a kingdom revealed, embracing earthly and heavenly things, which the regenerate alone saw, and into which they entered—to the heavenly things, of which the cross, as yet

as unintelligible as the heavenly things themselves, formed the only door, wherein was exhibited the Son of man lifted up, and the Son of God given in God's love to the world. "In the regeneration," of which the Spirit's quickening operation in the heart was the first-fruits, as his presence was the earnest of the heavenly part, "this Son of man would sit on the throne of his glory."

The principle, then, on which men dwell, is true ; but the revelation of this chapter is much wider and more definite than they suppose. It is not merely that the man is changed or saved ; but he sees and enters a kingdom the world knows nothing of, till it comes in power ; and moreover, that such a one receives a life as true and real, and much more important and blessed than any natural life in the flesh. It is not merely changing a man by acting on his faculties, but the giving a life which may act indeed now, through these faculties, on objects far beyond them, as the old and depraved life on objects within its or their reach ; but in which he is made partaker of the divine nature, in which not merely the faculties of his soul have new objects, but as in this he was partner with the first Adam, the living soul, so in that with the second Adam, the quickening Spirit. And we must add, that the Church, in order to its assimilation with Him in it, is made partaker of this, consequent upon his resurrection, and therefore is made partaker of the life according to the power of it thus exhibited ; and has its existence consequent

upon, yea as the witness of, the passing away (blessed be God!) of all the judgment of its sins; for it has its life from, and consequent upon, the resurrection of Christ out of that grave in which, so to speak, He buried them all. It exists, and has not its existence but consequent upon the absolute accomplishment and passing away of its judgment.

This, then, is the real character of our regeneration into the kingdom, where the charge of sin is not, nor can be, upon us, being introduced there by the power of that in which all is put away. The life of the Church is identified with the resurrection of Christ, and therefore the unqualified forgiveness of all its flesh could do, for it was borne, and borne away. The justification of the Church is identified with living grace; for it has it, because quickened together with Him, as out of the grave, where He buried all its sins. Thus are necessarily connected regeneration and justification; and the operation of the Spirit is not a mere acting on the faculties, a work quite separate from Christ and to be known by its fruits, while the death of Christ is something left to reason about; but it is a quickening together with Christ out of my trespasses and sins, in which I find myself indeed morally dead, but Him judicially dead for me, and therefore forgiven, and justified necessarily, as so quickened. The resurrection of Christ proves that there will be a judgment, says the apostle. (Acts xvii.) It proves that there will be none for me, says the Spirit by the same blessed apostle; for He was

raised for my justification. He was dead under my sins; God has raised Him, and where are they? The Church is quickened out of Jesus' grave, where the sins were left.

Then, as to the power of this life and the other operations of the Spirit, I find, in the Lord's account of his own testimony, the statement of *communion* and *displayed* glory. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." He testified that which He knew in oneness with the Father, which He had seen in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

The operations of the Spirit, in giving us life in the Son, and revealing the glory (ours therefore withal) into which He has brought his manhood, and which consequently is revealed in it, answer just to this statement of the Lord concerning Himself. Our communion—living communion with Him and with the Father—and our apprehension and expression of the glory which is his,—of these two the 4th and 7th chapters of John speak. In these chapters and elsewhere we have to remark, that we are taught, not of the Spirit's operating on, but dwelling *in* us. The Spirit of God does operate on, (whether in mere testimony, for the reception of which we are responsible, as in the case of the rulers of the Jews and St. Stephen—"Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye;" of which I do not speak now at large or efficiently,) in convincing, renewing, and quickening

us. This being done by the Word, it is by faith wherein (that is, in the reception of the Word) we are quickened; that is, the revelation of Christ. "We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." "Of his own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." These are sufficient to shew the manner of the operation; how, being a testimony, the natural man rejects it, though guilty for so doing; for it is God's testimony: and how it is effectual, in the quickening power of the Spirit; but is by faith, in consequence of the instrument employed. The power of it I have already spoken of; whence we see, while they that believe not make God a liar, they that believe have the witness in themselves; for they are made livingly partakers, in communion, of what they believe.

But the work, in virtue of which they are thus made partakers of life and fellowship with God, being a perfect work, the Spirit, who takes up his abode in the believer, is a spirit of peace and joy, a spirit of witness of all that Christ is and has done, and, we must add, of the Father's perfect acceptance of both.

That the natural man rejects these things, and receives them not, we shall see; but the conscience being awakened, and peace made, the Spirit is witness to the renewed soul of them.

Now, in the 5th chapter of John, we have the Spirit's operation, wherein, as to the manner, the

dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear live; and though, by the Spirit, it is still the Son speaking from heaven, as before on earth, *i. e.*, on Mount Sinai, which was by angels, as far as mediately, not by the Spirit.

As to the manner and character of the testimony, I would speak more when I come to the 7th chapter of John, where it is the witness of the glory of the Son of man, as thus given and present among believers.

I turn now to the instruction which the 4th chapter supplies, where it is compared to the living water; and we see at once the stupidity and incapability of the flesh to receive the things of the Spirit, in the repeated replies of the woman to the statements of the Lord, which, one would have supposed, must have awakened her to something beyond her ordinary thoughts. It is not the capacity of the flesh to receive it, but the revelation of the Lord concerning it, that I now refer to. It is not as a quickening agent he now speaks of it, but as a gift—that which was given by Him. Here, we must remark, Christ is the giver, not the gift. “He that drinketh of the water *that I shall give him*” (it is spoken of as indwelling), “it shall be *in him* a well of water.” Given as the energy of indwelling life—divinely given—the gift of God (as afterwards) that *I* shall give him—it springs up into everlasting life. It is divine life from the Son, enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Not as the Spirit

of God revealing his glory; but the power of life, having its communion and result in the eternal source from which it flows. Whether Jesus were in humiliation, or whether Jesus were glorified, this power was in Him; and though the expression of the power may be different, still it was the same power. He had life in Himself, as the Son of God. He might raise to natural life, or He might raise in resurrection life, and hence the difference; for now it is in the latter, being, in ultimate purpose, that in which power conforming to Himself is, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. It is life more abundantly, even if they were alive before.

With this new life withal, specially the Spirit dwells and bears witness. He might communicate the life then; but it could not be in the revelation or character which belonged to Christ as risen, or as the Head of the body. It was this great truth that was breaking through the clouds all through the Lord's discourse to his disciples; while He was affording to the nation to which He came, not only this, but the most ample evidence of every prophecy fulfilled, and power exercised, which left them without excuse as to his actual reception, whether we regard his character or person. Through this operation of the Spirit, so indwelling, with our new man, it is that God is specially known and enjoyed; but being the Spirit of the Son, in that we are quickened of the Son, God specially enjoyed and worshipped as the Father. This is the great result of the re-

velation of the Son, and our life in and by Him. And herein is eternal life. (John xvii. 2.) God was known in a measure to a godly Jew; but if He were sought in an especial manner of relationship, it was as Jehovah. To us the special manner of relationship is, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God."

We know Him as sons; but it is God who is known and enjoyed. This we find hinted at in this 4th chapter of John. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." But it is said, just before, "shall worship the Father; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." This communion with and knowledge of God is matter of exceeding joy—I mean, knowing Him and enjoying Him as God. There is a depth in it which, in that we do it in the peace and communion which is the result of all question of sin being laid aside, is, perhaps (it is hard to compare things in these subjects), beyond all other of our thoughts, and lasts through and beyond the actual covenant blessings which are our portion to enjoy as children. These, chastenings may remove for our need,—“If needs be, we may be in heaviness through manifold temptations.” But, though the joy may be weakened, the spring of righteous confidence in God is there; and, indeed, we are thrown more abstractedly and essentially upon God. We should joy in God at all times; but we are apt to turn to the blessings conferred, and in a measure forget the Blessor. (See Ps.

lxiii.) Hence the deprivation, that we may remember Him. But properly, this well of water springing up into everlasting life, is that partaking of the divine nature in which ("having escaped") we joy in God, repose in Him, delight in Him, are filled into his fulness, know Him indeed in the blessedness of actual revelation; but still in the name of God, as such, the power of this communion is conveyed, being rooted and grounded in love, knowing God and known of Him, it supposes all the rest of truth, and it is found in Christ. "He hath given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true—that is, in his Son, Jesus Christ—He is the true God and eternal life." Of this the ungrieved Spirit is the power, and blessed it is when it is so with us. It is based on the plainest truth,— "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Of this we have the perfect exhibition in Jesus, in spite of all trial; for how should the Spirit, which dwelt in all fulness in Him, even as a man, be grieved with divine perfectness? "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ." "That the love (says the Lord, speaking of the converse, and therefore the power of this) wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them;" and so, as to the form of it, as it were with us,— "In that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." But now we speak of it as specially knowing God. I think, if the psalms be studied, what Christ's Spirit

passed through and teaches us, will be deeply learnt in this—there, of course, among Jews it is Jehovah, when He speaks of covenant-blessings, as we have more specially to say, “Father:”—but not resting here on this distinction:—if the psalms, and parts of psalms, in which Jehovah is used, and in which God is used, be referred to, and compared and studied, the deepest practical instruction will be derived as to this power of communion from the Spirit of Christ itself: only we must remember, that for us it is founded on an accomplished work, and that which He passed through, as accomplishing it, is to us the fellowship of his sufferings or loving chastisement. We may look to the 42nd and 43rd Psalms as an example of this. But, further, if we turn to our Lord’s personal history, and note the difference between that word, “Father, let this cup pass from me, but not my will, but thine be done”—and, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”—we shall see the deepening entrance into another character of communion, in which the whole power and character of God were called out, borne indeed by Jesus our most glorious and blessed Head; that to us in that day, that power and character might become infinite and eternal joy; and is now to us all as to sons, through the consequent gift of God by virtue of his resurrection; for such is the power of eternal life to us consequent on Christ’s death.

O that the Church more entered into these things—walked more in the power of unseen communion

with God! I say not this, as though I did; but I say it only as so knowing the blessedness of it in Him, as to pray and desire it for the Church, in the sense of the lack of it often.

Hitherto I have spoken, either of the quickening power of the Spirit of God, as introducing us into the kingdom; or, as dwelling in the individual, as the power of eternal life, through which his communion with God is carried on: this there must be where there is life according to Christ Jesus. There remains a wide field to treat of, on which I feel almost deterred from entering; not because I fear there is not boundless joy in passing over, and learning it in one's own soul—entering into it; but because it is boundless, and that I feel deeply my inadequacy to do so properly, even to satisfy my own mind: and I will add, especially when one considers the responsibility of being a communicator, and, as it were, teacher of these things to others. The deep interest and importance of the subject is my excuse: I would not have done it, if it had not been pressed on my own mind. It is the largeness of the subject which deters me.

There is one thing I feel it important to notice ere I pass on:—though the Spirit is life, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and Christ as quickening Spirit is our life, yet the Holy Ghost is also spoken of as personally acting in power on our souls—acting in blessing; for He is

God; and while we are made partakers of the divine nature, and have this life of God in us as born of Him, yet this is not the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost is God. Therefore we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs;" and therefore, the Scripture speaks of the inner spiritual man being strengthened, renewed, as—"strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Though our outward man perish, our "inner man is renewed day by day;" so "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

The next point, before I pass on to its character and operation, is to advert to the fact of the special indwelling of the Holy Ghost: I mean *in* individual believers. I do not speak of this as if it were new to many who read this paper, but because I daily find it is new to many who inquire; and it puts the subject in entirely a different light. We shall see that it is connected with, and consequent upon, the ascension and glorifying of Christ; but we must remember, that while the coming down of the Holy Ghost is witness of ascension-glory and divine righteousness, and that our association in it was consequent (in the necessary course of the divine ministrations) upon Christ's entering into the glory, yet was it withal the power to us of all that whence it came, and into which, and association with which, it brings us; and so we shall see in the

texts to which I shall refer, closing with the one which more especially introduces me into my present subject;—"In whom," (we read in the Ephesians) "*after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." I know that this has been referred to gifts merely. To these I hope to refer before I finish this subject: but that it is not confined to these is manifest, however these may display it, because, in that case, where there were no gifts, there would be no earnest of the inheritance: but the Comforter Himself was to abide for ever. Besides, gifts are not spoken of here, but the Holy Spirit itself as the earnest; and to confound them, is to confound the giver and the gift; for the Spirit distributes of these to every man severally as He will, and they are only the *manifestation* of the Spirit given for profit; and confounding them (unconsciously perhaps) undermines the personality and deity of the Holy Ghost, and confounds the power of witnessing to others (which may be with no vital or sanctifying power) with the blessed and sanctifying communion with, and anticipation of, things hoped for and treasured up in Christ as ours, and to be displayed in that day. In a word, the Spirit which distributes the gift is not the gift He distributes, though He be displayed in the gift; nor are the things in which the given power is displayed, necessarily, any earnest of the inheritance at all; as in the gift of prophecy

as in Balaam's case, and as St. Paul states the possibility that a man might preach to others, and he himself be a castaway. And though their characters in some instances are indicative of the dispensation, and their number and circumstances may be different, yet the existence of extraordinary powers and acts in themselves were not characteristic of this indwelling and earnest of the Spirit. Many and remarkable miracles were wrought, and great power exhibited in service, before this came, before the Son of man was glorified. But these did not constitute the indwelling of the Spirit in the Church, for there was none such; nor in the individual, as an earnest of the inheritance; for they might be there, as in the case of Balaam, already adverted to, and the individual not be an heir: the Spirit in them might search, and find the things they ministered were not unto themselves. I propose to return a little to this, and would now pursue my more immediate subject.

In the Galatians we find—having shown that they were sons through faith in Christ Jesus, not servants,—“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;” clearly distinguishing between the regenerating power and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and speaking of one as a consequence of the other,—that it dwelt in an individual who was (and because he was) a son of God: we also see its distinction from a gift, for it is put in the heart to

cry, Abba, Father. Further, we see that, as in such sort there, it is proper to, and characteristic of, the dispensation. For it is not the *portion* of the heir when an infant, and as a servant, under tutors and governors, which they, *even if heirs*, were previously, not in immediate communion with the Father personally. They had not the mind needful for it, not having the Holy Ghost thus. But it is their portion when they take properly the place of sons, which they do in this dispensation; and though they do not as yet enter upon the inheritance, yet are they to have the mind renewed in knowledge concerning it, and enter into the full interests of the Father's house.

Again, says St. Peter, "We are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost, which is given to them that believe." We find it in similar language in Ephesians, and Romans viii.,—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and if Christ be in you," &c.; and in Ephesians,— "That ye may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." These are connected with communion, and mark it as an individual thing in which the heart has its portion by faith.

Again,—where the connection of things hoped for, and the power of communion in which they are enjoyed in the certainty of God's love, are brought together, "hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost given unto us.” Again, in 2 Cor. i., “For all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” A very full and blessed passage. God, the great Author of it all, and Power by which it is wrought, establishing us in Christ, our glorious and blessed Head, in the communion of all like glory with Him: in the communion of that in which, by the fulfilment of all the promises in their amazing blessedness in Christ Himself as his, *God* is glorified,—and this while we are assumed in grace into a portion with Him, we being the very subjects of the blessing, not merely in consequence, but in association, and therefore having all the consequences. It is ours, the promises being in Christ, to the glory of God *by us*. Now God stablishes us in this portion: how do we know it? how is it marked?—how enjoyed, and the earnest possessed, while we have it not, when the glory is not yet come? God hath established us in it: that is the assurance and security. He hath anointed us with that unction from Himself—the Holy One, whereby we know all things (compare the whole of the 2nd of 1 Cor. from verse 7 to the end, where this is fully explained): but then the having the Spirit is the seal or mark whereby we are significantly denoted as belonging to God, as his heirs,—“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he

is none of his;" but being given us to dwell in us, in that we are heirs, we have it as an earnest in our hearts, abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, knowing that we are sons, and delighting in the thought of the inheritance, and of being like Him who is "the first-born among many brethren:" and in this joy of the Holy Ghost, filled (it may be in the midst of much affliction) with all joy and peace in believing, the soul entering, as associated with Christ (and in this lies much, and that of the very kernel of the joy, though not all), into all the glory in which the promises of God are fulfilled in Him. I say, not all the joy; because it is not only, (with what riches are we endowed, yea, beyond all thought!) "*As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,*"—a blessing known, had communion with by the Spirit, as our portion, of which the glory is the display, as enjoyed along with Him,—but "that the world may know that *thou* hast loved them as thou hast loved me;" and therefore they are not only companions with the Son of man in the glory, but in adoption—sons of God, as brethren, being brought into this joy, as in the Father's kingdom, more properly the Father's *house*, where the place is prepared for us by the great First-born. Thus the Son's rich and unjealous love (for it is divine), in giving us the glory which was given to Him, displays us in the glory which approves before the world that the Father has loved us as He loved Him. Was ever anything like this

in love? Does it not, in its very conception, prove it altogether divine? None could deal, act, or know in such sort but God; and the very possession of these things in our hearts, is the witness that God is there, if they be known in love, holy love; for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him: and these things we have now, not in possession indeed, but in (the earnest of the) Spirit; as the same Spirit by the apostle speaks,—“These things write I unto you, that your joy may be full, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” This is a very holy place to dwell in, one that becometh saints—one that nothing but the blood of Jesus could purchase—none but God, by his wondrous work in Christ, present us faultless in the presence of. Yet, blessed be his grace (and the more blessed, because it is holy and enjoyed), in that we have the Holy Spirit revealing it, giving us a divine spiritual communion with it, sealing us as heirs of all of it, and the power of our joy in it. This is our place—our portion—O my soul, dwell there in joy, joy with Christ. You will note, He says, “His Son Jesus Christ;” which is not only the expression of faith, but presenting our blessed Lord in that character—the Saviour, the anointed Man—in which He has brought us into fellowship, and associated us with Him in this Sonship, and given us fellowship moreover with the Father as sons; ourselves sons, though in Him. And the converse of this is met in

that expression, "I say not, that I will pray the Father for you [as if the Father did not Himself love you]; for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and believed that I came out from God." This they had believed, but knew not yet in its fulness, known thus by the Holy Ghost (the Spirit of sonship given), namely, that He came forth from *the Father*. In this they were dull, it is the life of the saints: and this it is that makes the notion of sonship in Christ only when incarnate so destructive to the very elementary joy of the Church, and abhorrent to those who have communion by the Spirit in the truth.

But the joy and blessedness of which I speak, leads me at once to the statement, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Here again you will remark, it is an individual matter—the believer's portion, however it may be ministered. "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given], because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Now this statement (as I think we shall see) is one of extreme importance, and connected with the whole character and state of the dispensation, as being that of God's blessings, which are beyond all dispensation, except the fact of giving the Spirit as the power of divine life and worship, inasmuch as they lead into communion with Himself. The 4th chapter of John, of which I have

already spoken, though it involves, does not rest on dispensation ; but that, on the passing away of “ this mountain,” or even of that on which Jerusalem stood, the living power of communion with the Father every where, even with God as a Spirit, should take place. Hence it was a quickening power, shewn in humiliation, as well as in glory ; yea, according to love in gift proved in humiliation : and the hour then was, as well as was coming. Not so, though they may include these things, the 3rd and 7th chapters. The 3rd, as we have seen, contains the kingdom, and shews what must belong to a Jew to enter into its earthly portion, the quickening, which alone could bring even the nominal children into the kingdom, because it was God’s kingdom.

But here, in the 7th, we have the gift of the Spirit consequent upon the ascension-glory,—on the glorifying of Jesus. His brethren, representing in their unbelief the Jews, had proposed at the feast of tabernacles that Jesus should shew Himself *to the world*. Jesus’ reply was, their time was always ready, His time was not yet come. On the eighth day of that feast, and peculiar to it (the day of resurrection, the feast of the new week, the beginning of another scene), the great day of it, Jesus stood and cried. And as the water out of the rock (and that rock was Christ) followed and supplied the children of Israel through the wilderness till they came to keep the feast of tabernacles as at rest in the land, so Jesus,

his people being united to Him their glorified Head, would so fill them with the Spirit, that out of them should flow—not merely out of Him to them, but out of them should flow rivers of living water, even of the Spirit which believers should receive. But it is said—“out of his belly;”—now this is to me a blessed expression: the use of it for the thoughts, feelings, condition of the inner man, is familiar in Scripture—on this the peculiar blessing all rests; and herein the essential difference of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost as now, and when operating on prophets before. The possession of the Holy Ghost rested now on union, and consequently was a constant thing, and an earnest to the person in whom it dwelt of his own interest in the things it communicated. He was brought into communion, as united to the Head, in all the things in which that Head was revealed; and he had the Spirit by virtue of his being so united—the necessary witness therefore of his interest in them. And as this union was connected with a divine nature communicated, the mind, thoughts, feelings, joys, sorrows, interests, consolations, fears, hopes, and streams of love which that nature entered into, were now the portion of the saint, and that, withal, according to the power of the energy of the Spirit, which, though indwelling, still acted independently (*i. e.* as regards us), though, according to the order and revelations of the dispensation of which He was the power, speaking what he heard. I am not now speaking of the conflict, still, and therefore, existing with the flesh

(and, I must add, with the world, for both are the consequence of this very thing), but of the thing itself. This earnest of the Spirit is in connection with the glory of Jesus, therefore full of victory and full of hope. And yet, as it was the glory of the man witnessed, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in those not yet glorified, though sanctified to God, it became, on the one hand, the complete witness of the highest possible assurance of understanding, because Jesus was on the throne who had entered into the whole conflict, and of the Father's acceptance of Him in divine righteousness: yet withal, on the other hand, it entered into all the circumstances through which that righteous man did pass; so giving the pattern and formation of knowledge, the tongue of the learned, in all the trial through which the saints as led of the Spirit had to (and must) pass; their portion—and therefore a Spirit of perfect sympathy, the sympathy of the Spirit of Christ, as knowing the glory, and therefore sensible, according to God, of the extreme misery, and sorrow, and degradation, into which, as to circumstance, those in whom (as the witness of Jesus) He dwelt were plunged; and what their trial on the way to that glory and the path of patience towards it. Also was it witness of the Father's love as shewn in the glory; and hence it passed, as the river of that divine refreshment in the wilderness, through them, as flowing in their hearts, for they were united to Jesus, to refresh all to whom its heavenly and blessed streams came;

that drinking in this as the parched ground, a desert land, they might spring forth in green and refreshing fruits, which the great Head of the Church might find delight and joy in; while their joy was full in communion with that from which it flowed. For wherever the river is received, it is the river still.

Doubtless, not shewing Himself as amongst the Jews, his natural brethren, to the world, any individual amongst them, believing then, took the place of substituted and anticipative blessing then proposed; but, being matter of faith, it is, if "*any man thirst*"—and thus it is the portion to any man of faith. Then we have to enquire on what this depended; whence this flowing stream came. It was sent from the Father by Jesus glorified, and becomes the witness of all the acceptance, which the glorifying of Jesus, the great responsible man under our sins, declares,—and of all the glory to which He is entitled, and all that is displayed in his person as there sat down (which is our hope, for we shall see Him as *He is*, and be like Him),—and, moreover, of communion with Him, not according to that glory in which He will appear to earth (for I know not that that will need the Holy Ghost, though communion vitally with Him in any way does and will, but of this in the previous chapter); but according to the glory in which He sits on the Father's throne, in which we who are sons shall know Him in that day, and the church knows Him now as sitting on the Father's throne. There is a glory which He will take—his

own glory as visible Lord and Son of Man, in which every eye shall see Him: but there is a glory in which the Spirit now reveals Him, in which the church knows Him, in which, though Son of Man, He is one with the Father; a glory which He has taken as man, a glory with the Father, “*παρὰ σεαυτῷ*,” and which in itself He had with the Father before the world was, but which He has now taken as man, and which the Spirit communicates to us who are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, and gives us communion with it; and which forms the power and object of hope to our minds. As it is written, “We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness through faith.” That righteousness is established for us in Christ upon the throne; for He who bore our sins is gone to the Father in glory. The reward and end of that righteousness is this glory; hence we see that this is our portion in hope, for the righteousness is ours: and as, in Christ, the glory is ours too, although the oneness with the Father (which gives Him the place in which the glory is now) is his only, yet is not this without its blessing, for the church knows it in Him; and the full divine source of the glory is manifested. As now Christ is in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us; so, in the day of his appearing, shall it be Christ in us and the Father in Him, that we may be made perfect in one.

But this is not all of these streams of living water, though it may be the great source and fountain, the

glory of the Man on the Father's throne. For as the feast of tabernacles was, on the accomplishment of the promises, held in the land,—and as Solomon spoke it on the great typical celebration of it, “The Lord hath performed with his hand all that He spake to David my father with his mouth:” so to Christ Himself all the promises are made, as heir of all things, as Son of God, as Son of Man, and Son of David; as many as are the promises of God, in Him are they Yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us. Now as that which we have spoken of is for the glory of God manifested in Him, so, as it is by us, He takes the promises as man, that, having purged and sanctified them by his blood, He might introduce the children in witness of the Father's love as co-heirs. Hence as to them also, that which he is heir of as the glorified man (in title as Son of God) is, in knowledge and communion by the Spirit, part of these living streams. Therefore it is there added, “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ is God, who hath also anointed us, and also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” It not only then reveals the glory of Jesus as now on the throne of God as man, but also that which He takes when He appears in glory, when all shall be blessing, we being called to inherit a blessing; and therefore the moment the earth comes into blessing, it becomes a portion of our inheritance in Christ. “The Lord shall hear the heavens,” &c.: whatever there is

promised to Christ as the seed and great purpose of God (see Gal. iii.), whatever things there are in which the glory of God is displayed, and is the furniture, and reflection, and exhibition of that glory by Christ, and all things are for Him, is to that glory by us. Of this—in its wide and fullest blessedness as second Adam, Lord from heaven withal, the witness in blessing, evil being conquered, of all the Father's love unfolded in and on the creature taken into the inheritance—of this, I say, the Spirit is the joy to us in hope. And, as the promises are to us in Christ, and we see Christ, though all things be not yet put under Him, crowned with the glory and honour, in which He is the securer of them all—sustaining all things—the first-born of every creature, as well as first-born from the dead, and Head of the Church—we, being in Christ and partakers of the Spirit, have all these as abounding in hope; for they are witness of the Father's love and blessing, contributing to these rivers of living waters, that is, the knowledge of the glory of Christ as in them, enjoyed within by the Spirit; and, where so enjoyed, flowing over; for no human heart ever, when so enjoyed, could contain them.

And this surely is a joyous thought—for now we must take the promises in the widest sense—all things in heaven and in earth, all are Christ's as heir; for indeed He made them all, and all are to be reconciled in Him; and if reconciled to God, how full the

blessing! Well may the streams flow through the desert when Israel is there passing, for desert it shall be no longer when Israel is owned; the streams were not indeed *thence*, but they were *there* for the first-born when the first-born were there. A most blessed picture this of divine favour and exalting hope; the wilderness shall flourish and blossom as the rose, when in divine favour Israel obtains its inheritance; so, when Israel passes through it, for Israel (though the wilderness be unchanged by it) the streams which would renew and gladden it flow—refresh Israel blessedly through it. Thus beautifully does the song of Moses, when he would as his God prepare Him a habitation, and as his father's God exalt Him, declare, on his emergence from the Red Sea,—“Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.” To God they were already brought, so we. Afterwards—“Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place which Thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.” The place of Israel, as the redeemed tribes in hope, was Canaan—and Canaan strictly within Jordan; so that Moses chode with the two and a half when proposing to stay without—and the rest only are then called the children of Israel. So of the Church. But the promises to Abraham were all from the river of

Egypt to the great river; and there was a day coming when the wilderness and the solitary place would be glad for them, and the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose, and see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of their God; yet still the sanctuary which God had prepared for Himself to dwell in, was the place where they were to be brought in. Blessed portion! So with the saints now,—they have their place in heaven, and they know it *now* in spirit and in hope; know it as theirs, though evil spirits may yet for a very little season be to be resisted there, and have their hold till the great conflict comes, which shall exclude them for ever. Thus they have their place, their seat in the heavenlies beyond Jordan; blessed inheritance, where to them Christ has set the glory,—the glory of the Father, and his own!

Yet though it be thus, the world and all things are theirs, though it be a wilderness and they strangers in it; the moment they are redeemed, though they be not in the rest of Egypt, nor have the leeks, and cucumbers, and the onions, and the bondage, and though the world be a wilderness to them, a dry and barren land where no water is, they are called out into it as theirs—theirs, yet only as a wilderness,—but called out to hold a feast to the Lord there. And be it so, that they have holden a feast to the golden calf, while Moses is in the mount to receive the given law,—it does not alter what it is to the heart of faith; they have been led

forth, and not only do they know in spirit that they have been brought to God, so in spirit to be in the heavenlies, but they find, and it is because they find, Jesus there, and finding Him they find all things theirs, even where they are; and they can be fed only from heaven, guided only by what is heavenly, drink only thus from the rock, or rather have the river of God flowing in themselves; but in Jesus they know their inheritance;—"All things are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The wilderness is now only to pass through, there is nothing in it for them, yet all is theirs; but when Israel is in the wilderness, when the Church is thus passing through the world, which is its inheritance, the river is there, yea, is in their hearts; and they sing (for the redemption-work is complete in title, though not accomplished as to the creature in power), "But you hath He redeemed, reconciled;" "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation." When the water revives the wilderness itself—when the Son of man actually takes the world as his inheritance, and the Spirit is poured out, shall it not then be glad, and rejoice, and blossom? Well, it fills the heart of God's people, of him that believeth in Jesus now, and does so *because he is in the wilderness*: and shall he not rejoice and blossom? Yea, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; and though often the heartless sand may drink it in and give no

return, but be parched, and arid, and fruitless as before, yet wherever the earth of God's hand, and the seeds of God's planting are, there shall they also be refreshed and spring up through it.

I feel it very important to remark here, the individual character noticed before, because it is the saving principle in the midst of desolations and evil, whatever common good it may produce; it is not, *They* shall drink of the river from the rock, or drink of some common river, but, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" it is the personal possession and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. So the gospel of St. John, which gives what is essential and uniting, and not consequences, continually treats of it.

There is another point of view in which this indwelling of the Spirit has its peculiar feature and character in this dispensation. It results from the exaltation of Christ. The position in which He is is the witness of all things being accomplished; and He Himself is personally in possession of the result of that accomplishment, and we united to Him in it, He being there continually. Consequently it is as different as possible from any previous testimony of what was to be, let it be ever so blessed—as indeed the mystery was not fully revealed, nor, as I have already remarked as to the fact, had the testimony they had, any necessary connection with enjoyment of the things witnessed, no, not even where the witnesses were saints, as 1 Pet. i. shews. It was as

different also as possible from any operation of the Spirit producing fruits, even as the living Spirit of Christ, (though this was ever surely saving,) because it never witnessed, and never could witness, a living Christ and glorified man in the heavens, with whom they *were* one, who had accomplished all the things they were to enjoy, and which gave the title to, and ground of, their enjoyment of them. This could only exist when Jesus had accomplished them, was in the glory, and thence sent down the Holy Ghost, the power of communion to those united to Him. The thing itself did not exist—the work was not accomplished—and Jesus, as a man, was not in the glory; therefore we read, “the Holy Ghost was not yet given,” οὐπω γὰρ ἦν, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. The fact is, the union of the Church with Him as one body was not yet even revealed, but was a mystery hid in God, as Christ now is, known therefore and enjoyed only by the Holy Ghost given to them which believe. It was not, of course, that there was any different work by which man could be saved (a believer knows this is impossible), nor another Spirit, for there is but one. But that Spirit could not then testify that the believer (to whom He witnessed and whom He influenced) was then in union with the risen Jesus, with the man who was actually glorified as a present thing, as He does now to a believer’s soul; for the thing did not exist to be testified of. If it be said, it was true to faith; I answer, it was not as true to

faith that they were in union then, and knew Jesus as now glorified; for Jesus was not glorified, and therefore the Holy Ghost had not, on the footing of this union, taken up His abode in a believer's heart, "was not yet," in the sense of dwelling as the witness of the glorified man, in those who were united to Him. This made all the difference between being free, and hoping to be free on the certainty of a faithful man's word, who never lied, and was able to perform. Both were certain; but they were not the same thing: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;" this was the better thing reserved for us, that they without us should not be made perfect; this is that which made the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than the greatest born of woman; this presence of the Holy Ghost with and in believers, as the result of the accomplishment of Christ's work and the witness of their union with Him. This, too, I apprehend, is the difference between the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect. The children of Israel might have believed the Lord's promise, and did, as Jacob shewed—as Joseph shewed, when he gave commandment concerning his bones (Gen. l. 24): but however surely this faith was exercised, they could not say, "Thou, Lord, in thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habita-

tion;" for the work of their redemption was not accomplished:—they could sing *that* when they were brought out of Egypt through the Red Sea, though they were only brought into the wilderness where there was no way, nor food, nor water; for they were redeemed. I now take in the whole course, not any particular type.

I dwell thus much upon this, because many find it very difficult to understand how, if the way of being saved is the same, the state of those that are so can be different; whereas "the heir so long as he is a child *differeth nothing from a servant*, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors," having no free and immediate intercourse with the father's mind, nor understanding of the father's interests.

Known sonship with the Father, and union with Christ, seeing what Christ's title is, are primary characteristics of this indwelling of the Spirit; and though we see not yet all things put under Christ, yet we see Him crowned with the glory and honour, so that we rejoice in the prospective title, knowing that "He is not ashamed to call us brethren."

Thus, in the 8th of Romans, where this presence of the Spirit, as the very character of this dispensation, is much brought out, after shewing His moral operations (*i.e.*, as life in the soul), and the quickening of the body, then spoken of as personally dwelling in present witness with us; He bears witness that we are children, therefore heirs, "heirs of God,

and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together." Now, in this we have the whole case;—children, the assembly of the first-born, put, as Israel was, in the wilderness. Israel is my first-born. Next Canaan before us, heirs of God; for that was his land, and his title in Israel reached from river to river—Canaan and the wilderness, heaven and earth. "Joint-heirs with Christ," as they of Immanuel's land; and "if so be that we suffer," they must pass through this world, as a wilderness simply. Now the Holy Ghost takes up all this, and in its two great characters—the glory and the suffering; the glory belonging to us as children and co-heirs, and this we have in hope. When our prospect is dimmed, we become careless about it, and profane in our minds; when bright, we need nought but manna, and the water, and patience for the wilderness, longing for the rest, submitting to the will of God concerning it. And when our souls are really dwelling as in the glory, when the grapes of Eshcol really fill our souls, there is deadness to all, save the savour and brightness of the hope: what is heavenly is heavenly to us; for we are heavenly-minded, we see the glory of the Lord, and it is in a place where his eyes are continually—a land not watered by foot, but by rivers that run among hills and valleys, the very dwelling-place of the Father's kingdom. The Spirit in the revelation of God (for it is God) causes us thus to dwell in the fulness of God; and from hence we estimate the

inheritance, the fellowship with Christ in it, and the glory; we dwell in it in the sweet savour of divine delight in Jesus, who fills all things, and will in very deed do so, and is now revealed so to us by the Spirit. His presence, as actually taking it, shall fill and gladden heaven and earth, banishing evil. But then, *now* it is, "if so be we suffer," for the very dwelling in this glory, and seeing in spirit the whole creation reconciled, brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God—it cannot be of their grace—waiting for the manifestation of these sons,—makes us the more and distinctly sensible how it groans and travails together in bondage until now; and our body, too, being part of this, it becomes sensitive and sympathetic groaning. Now we know this groaning of the creation by our dwelling in the glory, but it becomes sympathetic because we are connected with it in our body, and that as unredeemed. But then it is not merely the selfish feeling of evil. The intercession of the Spirit in us is according to God. The Spirit, as dwelling in us, estimates the evil not according to mere human pain in it, but in the divine estimate of it, as interested in and dwelling in them who are in the midst of the evil, and partakers of it as to their bodies; and all their groans which take up the known groanings of the creation (for it is as to the body which is of it) are not from selfish pain, but the Spirit's sense of the evil, as dwelling in us; and though we, as to mind and intelligence, cannot tell what to ask for, yet He who searcheth the heart

knows what the mind of the Spirit that dwells there is; for He makes intercession according to God. Thus the Spirit, that other Comforter, in and through our hearts, feeling, in the non-adoption of the body, that it dwells in a world groaning under the bondage of corruption, not only teaches from the glory, so that we say, "We know," but expresses (in sense of it all, yet according to God) the need according to God, to be met in the saints now by more enlarged and deeper communion, and that glory in hope which shall put it all away.

As regards our own exercise on these things, I would say a very few words. As in the Spirit, our joy is full, the savour of heavenly things is fresh, our path easy; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," there is communion which makes all light, and we walking and dwelling in it, and every thing shines in it. The Holy Ghost is the communicating power of all fulness: but when we come to the wilderness there is exercise, difficulty, the heart is proved; all is opposite, it is a wilderness; and rest in a wilderness only keeps us in a wilderness still, and, indeed, will be found going back soon in heart after Egypt. For rest, we shall find it a wilderness, and bring the chastenings of the Lord of faithfulness upon us. Now even where trouble is, if the heart be right in the sight of God, God is known through it all; it is not that the trouble will not be felt, far from it; the more perfect the faith, the more it will be felt: the more I know, the more my heart and thought

is in Canaan, the more I shall understand what the wilderness is: yea, the very worship of God, blessed as it may be, will be and savour of the wilderness; my mercies are mercies of the wilderness; my food, food for the wilderness; the clouds may guide me to Canaan, but in Canaan I shall need no cloud for the way,—still, where the spirit is bright through grace, though it feels all this, it has rich and deep experience of God, which works hope which maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. In that patience of spirit which is learnt only in the wilderness (what patience shall we need in Canaan?) the deeper parts of God's character are learned. If faith had to bear six hundred thousand rebellious ones, as if it had begotten them, how would it learn, through cultivated communion, the depth of God's patience, the wisdom of his purposes, the extreme perfectness of his love, uncaused by anything it found, bent upon blessing,—how He knew the end from the beginning, and while we were travailing in heart about present circumstances, God was using them for bringing forth to that heart the certainty of future hopes, or forming it for the enjoyment of them! And how in us would the moulding of heart in this intimacy of God's ways, intrinsically form us for the estimate of the glory in breaking the links (which seemed strange to those occupied with present things) which tied us to those things, that the life in us might grow up into unhindered association with whatever was hea-

venly! It requires the wilderness (not to give a title which would bring us to God, but) practically to put God instead of Egypt within us; I do not say it ought, and that we ought not to be as Caleb and Joshua, ready at once to go up, and the grapes of Eshcol be our encouragement in going onward, rather than the sons of Anak our fear; for they bear the stamp of the beneficence and power of Him who called us there,—they were the grapes of his land, and this Lord was well able to bring us in. But it is God's way habitually with us. But when our faith tastes those grapes, when our hearts are thus, we can rise over trouble, however felt; and when we are spiritual, all trouble is the instrument of the blessed experience of God.

God's purposes are not ours, and He always works for his own, which are our perfect blessing, the making of us conformed to the image of his Son, co-heirs, "the glory of God by us." Now in our blessed Master, as learning obedience by the things which He suffered, we see this path in the wilderness in perfectness, feeling as none else felt, but seeing (even then in perfect submission) the divine perfectness of the Father's ways, and the end too they led to, His glory, enjoyed as joy set before Him, as a river of sure and blessed water too, thus to give rest and refreshment. "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:" here was true grief, and thoroughly felt as grief. There is no true

grief but where there is no resource around; and around Jesus had none. "Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, because they were not;" the word to her was: "There is no hope in thine end." But let us look to Jesus. "In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of *heaven and earth*, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it *seemed good in thy sight*." "*All things are delivered unto me of my Father*, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." How did the rivers of water flow forth here from this heart-smitten rock! There was none indeed without: but how did they flow from the revealed depths within! The waters gushed forth, his own soul full, "All things are delivered,"—I can reveal the Father,—"Come to me." How did his pent soul burst forth from the "Then have I laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought!" and in vain, as to present circumstances, to spread these living streams in the wilderness, which have, blessed Lord Jesus! refreshed the church, and shall refresh it through the wilderness, till it need nothing but thyself in Canaan. And are we not sons; poor in-

deed, but still, in exaltation of his fulness, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And where the Spirit of God really is, there is no breaking, no smiting, no operation of patience through the word, but brings forth more of them; for we are associated with infinite fulness now in Jesus. Because all perfectness was there, it all burst forth at once, and "I thank thee" was in one hour with "Woe unto thee." In us often, that these streams may flow and flow pure, there is much process; and when the flesh is at work, and our will is at work, then, till laid low, there is no perception of the brightness and fulness before us, yea, with which we are in communion; for the flesh hath no communion with it, the will no part or portion in it: and till we are brought to say, "I thank thee," "I glory in my tribulations," there is no "All things are delivered," as they are ours in Jesus,—no real "Come to me," though in our mere judgment we may say, There is the place where it is to be found: and this is deep work; but it is God's work. Thus much for the flowing of these living streams in us: they are all heavenly; and only as we are simply heavenly will they run. Wretched we, that we should need so much to make God's blessed refreshing streams flow! Wondrous love, that He should patiently do so much! May we be enabled to say always, though not callous, "*I thank thee!*" Still, in all this bondage of corruption, though the will by which it came in was in man, not in the creature

without (therefore Jesus' was pure sorrow, because it was all according to God—ours not), though this will yet working in us must be subdued; yet, where the Spirit is, God, seeing it, in love, *i. e.*, towards us, and putting in action the special process in love, that this will may be broken, every groan which does come (when ye know not what to ask for, nor how) is the perfect intercession of the Spirit whose mind is known to Him who searcheth the hearts, so that we may be comforted: and, resting in God, God will shew us the brightness beyond. A true groan *to God*, however deep the misery, however prostrate the spirit, however unconscious that we are heard, is always received above as the intercession of the Spirit, and answered according to the perfectness of God's purpose concerning us in Christ; therefore the charge is, "Ye have not cried *unto me*, when ye have howled upon your beds:" and there is no consequence of sin which is beyond the reach of this groaning to God, nothing indeed but the self-will which will not groan to Him at all. This is a blessed thought! such is our intercourse with God in joy and in sorrow; and I doubt not that in us poor, but blessed creatures, the truest, the most blessed (what will shine most when all things shine before God), are these groans to Him: they cannot, indeed, be, in their fulness, but where the knowledge of the glory of blessing is. I can see them precede the greatest works and words of Jesus. The sense of the wilderness, taken into his heart, made but the

streams which could refresh it, flow forth in the sympathy of the Spirit which it called forth; and now the Spirit is in us. I believe I must for the present close these thoughts. This has touched but upon one point (and O how narrowly and poorly! what muddy water!)—the presence of the blessed and heavenly Spirit in the desert, as in our hearts, with joy for the things it gives in union with our Head, and refreshing for the scene it passes through, where God's poor pilgrims are; the messenger of all their sorrow according to his estimate of it, who knows, loves, and effects the blessing of the portion of Christ in his people, as dwelling in them—their blessed Paraclete. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Hitherto we have seen the blessed Spirit generally, in His characteristic living operations, and not so much ecclesiastically, if I may so speak. The third, fourth, and seventh chapters of St. John's Gospel have given us clear instruction in this:—

Firstly, as quickening or giving life.

Secondly, as given; and thus a well of water in us springing up into everlasting life: thus, too, as manifesting, or connected with, the riches of grace—making us know the Father as seeking such to worship, the God of love—and enabling us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, as thus known in the grace that has sought us—brought in by faith to fellowship with Him, fellowship with the Father

and the Son, out of every nation—in a word, the dispensation of the manifested Son; manifested to faith as one with whom we are in union through the Spirit: this by the gift of grace.

Thirdly, as flowing forth from us, a river of refreshings—and this in connection with the glory of the Son of man; and therefore not so much the power of worship, as the earnest of glory, and the power of refreshing, and glorious testimony that man in Him prevails and has the glory; though yet he must wait for it till He be manifested to the world, set right indeed by his presence, in that great feast of tabernacles.

The first of these chapters (John iii.) closed proper Jewish intercourse, shewing that they must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God: and so was *every one* that was born of the Spirit, the cross, or the lifting up of the Son of man, closing all present earthly associations, and introducing heavenly things as yet unknown. In the second (John iv.), the Lord, having thereon left Judea, going into Galilee, passes through Samaria, and there, with one of the most worthless of that reprobate race, shews the gift of God, and the consequence of the humiliation of the Son of God—thereon introducing the Father's name, and spiritual worship by grace. Thus the gospel dispensation is introduced by it, and its worship, sonship, and joy. In the third (John vii.) we find it flowing forth, from filled affections, to the world, the witness, though not the accomplishment, of that

day when Jesus shall appear in the glory witnessed of, and it shall be as life from the dead:—and that, indeed, through his then unbelieving brethren here below. The fourth chapter—that is, the second of those alluded to—is more large and general, as the power of all living communion with God, and thus is *specially* the saint's place. It identifies itself more especially with the present prayer of the third of Ephesians, founded on the title, "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," though that goes further. The seventh chapter—or the third here alluded to—identifies itself more especially with the former part of the prayer of the first of the Ephesians, the portion of the Church also, it is true, but more its hope than its communion, and founded on the title, "God of our Lord Jesus Christ," looking thus at the Lord as the head of the body—the first-born among many brethren, the first-born from the dead, the head of the body the Church, as is plainly seen in the testimony of the Apostle which follows—not in the nearness of the divine nature as Son, but in appointed, though righteous, headship as man, the appointed heir of all things; both indeed hanging on his being the Son, but one connected with his nearness to God, even the Father, which is indeed *oneness*; the other his manifestation in glory, according to divine counsel, when He takes his place with the Church toward the world; though, of course (and necessarily) the Head of it—she the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

That I may not omit the intervening chapters of John, but that we may see what a summary of divine theology it is, as a testimony to the person of the Lord Jesus in its height above all dispensation, I would here observe, that the 5th contrasts the entire incompetency of any restorative power connected with the law (because it required strength in the patient, which was just what the disease of sin had destroyed, as well as his righteousness which would not have needed it)—in a word, the entire futility of *all remedial* processes—with the absolute life-giving power of the Son of God in union with the Father; and shews, in addition, on his rejection (the rejection of his word, for so that power wrought), the judicial power put entirely into his hands as Son of man, to execute judgment on all that rejected Him, that all men might honour the Son, even as they honoured the Father.

The 6th chapter shews what was proper to Him—his place and that of his disciples—as rejected. First, it shewed Him (who fulfilled that word, Ps. cxxxii. 13–15, “He shall satisfy her poor with bread”—the Jehovah of Israel’s blessing in the latter days, when Zion shall be his “rest for ever”) as Prophet, refusing to be king, and thereon going up to exercise his priesthood of intercession apart on high. In the meanwhile, the disciples were toiling alone on the sea, and the wind contrary, aiming but not attaining. Immediately on Jesus (who could walk on all the difficulties) rejoining them, they

were at the land whither they went. This blessed little picture of the order and circumstances of the dispensation having been given, the humiliation of Jesus, as the portion of the Church during his priesthood, is then shewn, as affording its food and strength of life. First, his coming down and incarnation—the manna, the true bread that came down from heaven; next, as sacrificed and giving the life He had thus taken as man—believers thereon eating his flesh and drinking his blood, thus living by Him; then closing by the question, “What and if ye shall see the Son *of man* ascend up where He was before?” This, as we have seen, is followed by the instruction of the 7th chapter, where the time for the manifestation of the Son of man to the world *was not yet come*, and the gift of the Holy Ghost *as the intermediate witness of his glory as Son of man* is spoken of. This point has been spoken of in the former part of these remarks; I revert to it now, merely as shewing the beautiful order of the instruction of the Spirit in the Gospel of St. John.

There is another point connected with the operations of the Spirit of our God, which remains to be touched upon—his corporate operations, or his operations as acting in connection with the body of Christ, both as maintaining, and the very centre of, its unity; and also as ministering in the diversity of His gifts; and also the distinction between this and His individual presence in the believer.

This last difference will be found to be important,

and to flow from, and be connected with, the whole order of the economy of grace, of which the Spirit of God is the great agent in us, and, though not received there, still, in a certain sense in testimony, in the world.

This difference depends on the relative character which Christ stands in: first, with the Father, as Son, and us by adoption made sons with Him: and secondly, with God, as the Head of the body, which is his fulness, the Church. We shall find the scriptures speak definitely of both, and distinctly. In one, the Lord Jesus holds a more properly divine relationship with the Father, and introduces us by adoption into something of the enjoyment of that nearness. In the other, a relationship (though all be divine) yet more connected with his human nature and his offices in that, and therefore God is spoken of as *his God*. The distinction and reality of these two things is expressed by the blessed Lord Himself going away. Having accomplished the redemption, which enabled Him to present his brethren along with Himself as sons to the Father, in his (the Father's) house, spotless, and sons by adoption, and to assume his place as the Head of the body, the Church, He did not yet allow Himself to be touched and worshipped as in bodily presence in his earthly kingdom; for He was not yet ascended to his Father, so that He could bring forth the fulness of his glory, and that that kingdom should be manifestly of the Father, and have its root and source in

that higher glory: but, putting his friends, and that for the first time, into the place of sons and brethren, He says to them (thus setting the saints, and Himself for them, in their place), "Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;" thus establishing these two relationships, and his disciples along with Himself in them.

Then the Lord ascended up on high for the accomplishment, in power, of what He now spoke of, in the truth and efficacy of the work which He had accomplished, and the value of his presented person before the Father, as well as the blood by which sin was put away.

On this statement in John hangs, in fact, the distinction to which I have alluded, followed up in scripture by many other passages. It is the definite revelation of the characters in which Jesus Christ was going away, and which He was to sustain in our behalf on high; placing us in fellowship with God and the Father in them. There was another point, however, connected with this, involved in the position which Christ assumed: *He is the displayer of the divine glory*—his Father's glory—"He that hath seen me hath seen *the Father*,"—*He shall appear in the Father's glory*. He was on earth "God manifest in the flesh," seen too of angels: again, "the brightness of God's glory, the express image of his person." His glory too was Sonship, as of the only begotten of the Father, *ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρὸς*: as again, "the only

begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell: and, as afterwards stated, in fact, as in good pleasure, "In Him *dwelleth* all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*." Thus we see the person of the Lord Jesus, the place in which divine glory is in every sense manifested. But He is now hid in God: that is the position which He has now taken; and thereon the Holy Ghost is sent down into the world, to maintain the witness and manifestation of his glory (not brought out yet visibly on earth, but personally accomplished on high, "crowned with glory and honour"), and to be the earnest and testimony of his title to the earth. The Church on earth is the place and depository of this: "He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Now the Holy Ghost, as thus sent down from heaven, is the witness of what Christ is there for us towards the Father; and what his title is as of God towards the world; and specially therein, what the power of the hope of the calling and inheritance of God in the saints is. The enjoyment and testimony of these things may be much blended in the operations of the present Spirit; but they are distinct. As for example—the display of my portion in Christ as the Son before the Father, may fill my heart and make me a witness and a testimony of it, to the blessing and comfort of the Church, if the Lord ac-

company it with the suitable gift of communication ; and the power of it in my soul in joy is intimately blended with the thing to be expressed ; because *so* the Holy Ghost acts in this work. It is therefore said, "Out of *his belly* shall flow rivers of living water." Still they are quite distinct : for a man may have these things shewn to his soul, and enjoy them, and yet not have the gift to communicate them to others ; though they be the deep (possibly, I suppose, the deeper) joy of his own : so that, though connected when both are there, they are distinct things. I suppose that those who have gift of testimony, have often found as much (or more) joy in hearing the blessed things of Christ, as in uttering them ; though the sense and joy of the blessed things may have ministered to their capacity of utterance. I would speak then distinctively of these two points, though their blending, if the Lord will, may be noticed.

In the earlier passages in John, and the remarks which were made upon them, the Holy Ghost who is sent, was spoken of as the power of life ; the power of communion ; the power of communication. In the latter part of John and other places, *the sending* of the Spirit is specially spoken of, because the absence and going away of Christ was brought before their minds as a present fact ; and hence the Spirit is shewn as the sustainer of the relationships, induced by the mystery of Christ being thus hid in God, and another Comforter sent. Life-communion with God the Father and the Son, communications concerning

the glory of the Son of man, were all distinct and blessed things; but they were not the revelation of the dispensation in which they were ordered, nor the display of the relationships which those dispensations brought to light, though to the instructed soul they might imply them. This is taken up first in the close of John's gospel. We shall also find it brought out on other ground later in the close of Luke.

It is introduced in John by the statement made to his disciples, "As I said unto the Jews, so now I say unto you, Whither I go, ye cannot come." In the earlier part of the subsequent chapter, the Lord introduces their comfort: that He was to be the object of faith as God was; that He was not going to be alone in blessedness, and leave them here to themselves in misery, but going to prepare a place for them; and that He would come again and receive them to Himself; that where He was they might be—a far better thing than his being with them in the condition they were in. But meanwhile they knew where He was going, and the way. This resulted, as He explained to them, from their knowing the Father, (to whom He was going,) in knowing Him; for He was in the Father and the Father in Him. Thus, the great scene into which they were brought, in the knowledge of the person of the Lord Jesus, and his oneness with the Father—He in the Father and the Father in Him—was introduced: the scene of associated blessedness,

into which the disciples were brought by the living knowledge which they had of Jesus, was declared: *but the power* in which it was *known* and *enjoyed* was not yet. But the knowledge of the Father, through the Son, as the object of faith, was now declared, and the subsequent display of his glory in the world, by reason of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, spoken of. The Lord, then, urging obedience to Him as the way of receiving blessing, takes the place of Mediator to obtain the Comforter for them—another Comforter, who should not leave them as He was doing, but was to abide with them *for ever*. This it was that was the *power* of their association with that of which they had heard before—the fellowship of the Father and the Son: first, of the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father, and then of them with both, in that it was by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them—the Comforter now sent. Thus, though they could not come there, they saw Jesus, and He came to them, and with the Father made his mansion with them, till He came and took them into the mansions of his Father's house.

This 14th chapter then, gives us the blessedness—the knowledge of the Father and the Son, by the Son; the order of it, obedience to the Son; the power of it, the presence of the Comforter obtained through the mediation of Christ: but thereon (consequent on this presence) their *knowledge* that He was in the Father, they in Him and He in them—a

blessing far beyond mere mediation, but consequent on the presence of the Spirit obtained by mediation. This also is added as a consequence: that the Father and the Son would come and make their abode with them. Still, in this chapter, whatever the effect of the mediation in their knowledge was, Christ does not go beyond the place of Mediator here, and therefore He tells them that the Father will send the Spirit in His name, and He (the Spirit) would recall all the Lord's words and instruction to them.

This chapter* settles the ground of our present blessing on its basis, as to the place of the great

* In fact, in the 14th chapter, Christ speaks much more as on earth (see ver. 25), though on the ground of His going away, and shews them they should have known His person† there, and thus have known where He was going, and the way. After the 16th verse He speaks more of their position on His going away, and its consequences, still as being yet there. Hence the word is (they being looked at in this character, and the Father on high), "I will pray the Father, and He shall give." In the 16th chapter, where union has been treated of, and they as it were placed in Him before the Father, it is, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you;" and *they* ask in His name; for they were so placed before the Father. And in the end of the 15th it is, "whom I will send." "Arise, let us go hence," closes the mere individual earthly place.

The 15th chapter does not declare the exaltation of Christ as the Head, on high, Israel, the nominal vine, being rejected, His being the true vine Himself, even here below, and fruit-bearing to be the test of abiding in it. We know that it is in exalted headship in heaven, at God's right hand, that He is now thus the living source of fruit-bearing; but this is no part of the statement, chapter xv.; but the testimony of the Holy Ghost is direct evidence that He was gone up there, accepted and glorified of the Father. Remarking this, much elucidates John xv. It is the then connection of the disciples with Him and fruit, but not exaltation to heaven.

† In the power of which He speaks; as, "I will do it."

objects of it—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is quite distinct from the subsequent chapters. The person of the Lord as the object of faith, and his mediation, are spoken of in it. In the 15th chapter, we see that, even here below, Israel was not the true vine, but Christ. Of his life below *they* were to be the personal witnesses, for they had seen it: of his exaltation as Head on high, the Holy Ghost, sent down, thereon, by Him.*

Hence, in this passage, it is not the Father who is spoken of as sending the Holy Ghost in the Mediator's name, but the Lord Jesus *who sends* the Comforter from the Father, in connection with his glory, to testify of his glory, proceeding from the Father. It is to be remarked here, that, while much of this latter part connects itself very closely in detail with the operations of the Holy Ghost, given in connection with the Lord Jesus, as calling God his God as well as ours; as the man who, through grace, places Himself in association with us *in need* as in glory, yet He never, in this part of Scripture, puts Himself *out* of the place of Son paramount to

* Herein is a distinctive difference of the Apostle Paul's ministry. He could not have the second part of the witness mentioned in the chapter. He had not been with Jesus from the beginning. When he saw Jesus, he saw Him only in the glory of his heavenly Lordship, of which the Holy Ghost testified too. This made his testimony a more purely heavenly testimony; as he says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." St. Peter, in testimony, would hardly have said this, though preaching the same truths. He says: "A witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed."

all dispensation. Though He may take the lowest place in service and obedience, still, it is on a principle paramount to all dispensation; or, though the acts alluded to may have their place in connection with dispensed power (as the testimony of the Spirit will be found to have), yet still, Christ holds the place here, in which He sends Him for that purpose, as paramount to the associations revealed by the Spirit, so sent, in those acts. He testifies that all that the Father has are his, as Son (though the acts by which He may do it may be the witness and consequence of a union with Christ), putting, by grace, ourselves and Him, not merely as SONS before THE FATHER *individually*, but as a *body* with its *head* before GOD.

This distinction will be found to be important; because the exercise of the dispensed power may depend on the condition of the body through which it is dispensed—the testimony of the sent Spirit to the glory of the Head, who sent it, *never can*.

And this is what is peculiar in the state of the Church. Its standing in Christ is above all dispensation; it is as sons along with Him with the Father. Its manifestation in time may be by dispensed service; and here it partakes of all the responsibility of a dispensation on earth, as of deeds done *in the body*. Thus this gospel begins anterior to Genesis, which recounts the creation of the scene on which dispensations have been displayed: there, “In the beginning God created;” here, “In the beginning

was the Word," by whom all things were created. And the Church derives its existence and heavenly fulness from this sovereign source: the purpose of it being effectuated consequent on the rejection of the Son of man, who would have been the righteous crown of all natural dispensation; but who, as risen, associates the redeemed Church with Himself, in a position paramount to it all—even his own association of Sonship with the Father, in the privilege of the same love: and the Holy Ghost is here sent down of Him, the witness and power of this, and therefore in his own action paramount to all dispensation, but this only in the fact of his testimony to Him as so exalted; and this is the point St. John here takes up. Now the manifestation of his (Christ's) corporate Headship to the Church, in which He says, in our behalf, "My God," as He had said so in blessed title of righteousness when the Pattern of our place below, depends (and hence the *present manifestation* of the Church's glory as united to Him) on the obedience of the Church, and its suitableness to be made an instrument of display here; quite a distinct thing from the certainty of its union to and the known and infallible glory of its Head on high. This is a permanent revelation; not a responsible manifestation which partakes of the nature of a dispensation on earth, though the glory testified to in it may be above all mere dispensation, for its head and for itself. The joy, moreover, and sense of glory, may also depend on obedience and consistency, not the

permanent fact that the Spirit testifies of his glory, in the Church. Thus in John xv. it is written, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." There could clearly be no doubt of the Son's continuing in the Father's love, but the dispensation of this on earth hung on the obedience on earth, in Him infallibly perfect, and therefore so its consequences; in us continual failure and its consequences also.

We have seen that the testimony of the Spirit is to the glory of Jesus Christ. Sent by the Father in the Son's name, He is the power of union and communion with both; associating the disciples in the fulness of blessing with both, and the presence of both manifested thereby to the believer. Sent by the Son—the exalted man—from the Father, He is the witness of his glory, and that all that the Father has, is that Holy, but rejected, One's also.

From the remarks I have already made, it will be seen that in the 16th chapter of John, the Spirit and his testimony, as there presented to us, are the inde-feasible portion of the saints, the necessary testimony of the glory of Christ. It forms and sustains the Church, instead of depending on the Church's obedience, although the extent of the Church's enjoyment of the blessing may hang upon that obedience. He is the witness of the acceptance by the Father of the obedience of Christ, the perfect Son of God, and of the glory of his person: thus establishing our

present standing with God, and our Father, and the place of the Church, owning this by his operation through grace, in contrast with the world, who rejected Jesus as the Son of God.* Hence, although the obedient disciples of the Lord Jesus were the instruments of the testimony, yet these are dropped as regards the testimony in the first instance; and the subject spoken of is, the Comforter's testimony in a conviction of the world. He is present as the witness of the glory of Christ; that is, as the abiding power of the dispensation, the *necessary* character of the testimony of *his very presence in the world* was this—that He was come in condemnation of the whole world before God; for it had rejected the Son whom the Father had sent in love to it. He had said, "I have yet one Son," and they had cast Him out—not merely Jews were in question, the world had done it—man had done it: "He was despised and rejected of men." Every grace of God, every righteousness of man, had been shewn in the Son of God; they had seen no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Nay more, as the Lord had distinctly shewn of the world, they had both seen

* As it is the direct testimony of the presence of the Holy Ghost, convicting the world of sin in its rejection of Jesus, and of the Father's reception and owning of Him as his Son, and consequent judgment, the disciples (not yet properly the Church) are entirely omitted; but as regards them in detail, the great principle of obedience, being the ground of blessing, is preserved in the 14th chapter, where this point is spoken of—"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you a Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever."

and hated both Him and the Father—hated Him, blessed and perfect in his ways, without a cause!

It is on this solemn ground the Lord appeals to his Father, in the 17th chapter. For the children, He had called for the Holy Father's care. As to the world, He appeals to his righteous Father's judgment. He and the world now were entirely contrary the one to the other: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me." The presence of the Holy Ghost, sent down on the departure of the blessed Son of God, proved the world to be in irreparable sin in not having believed on Him. Nothing else was seen in the world. It lay in wickedness. Righteousness there was none. The only righteous One had been rejected, and cast out and slain. God had not interfered to prevent it, nor Jesus resisted it; for deeper purposes were in accomplishment. But the evidence of sin was complete, irrefutable, and in itself in the world irreparable, in the accomplishment of its highest act—an act shewing hatred to the gracious presence of the Lord, as well as contradictory of the righteousness of man before Him. Righteousness thereon was not looked for on earth in man; for sin had been proved. It was found only in the reception of the righteous man—the Son of God, on the throne of God on high, and the condemnation of the world in seeing Him no more as so come. This also was testified by the presence of the Holy Ghost, sent down as a conse-

quence of Jesus being there. The *judgment* (not now executed) was proved as against the world; because he who, in leading them against Christ, had been now demonstrated by the world to be its prince, was judged: the rest would follow in its day. Thus the presence of the Holy Ghost, convicting the world in these things, formed the testimony to Christ's glory here—his witness against the rejecting world.

To the disciples He was in blessing: in leading them into all truth, truth which they were unable to bear till He came, truth connected with Christ's glory, and the consequent breaking down of all they then knew and clung to; and not only leading them into all *actual* truth, but shewing them things to come; the portion of the Church—their portion and God's future dealings with the world too. In this He would glorify Christ, taking of his and shewing it to them; and all that the Father had was his. This then the Holy Ghost did, as against the world and with the disciples, in the testimony of Christ's glory. If by grace a man received the testimony as against the world, and was subdued by it, and gave up the world and followed Christ with his disciples, he became the happy subject of that further service of the Holy Ghost; guiding, shewing, glorifying Christ as the possessor of all the Father's. This is the office and service of the ever-abiding Comforter (in whatever degree *enjoyed*), for the need of Christ's glory, till the Church be caught up to enjoy it there, and the world be actually judged; so that there shall

be no need of testimony to either on these points, though the Holy Ghost may be to the Church the perpetual power of enjoyment in them, and God's glory by them.

The presence of the Holy Ghost implies and involves this—the need, before God, of Christ's glory. In this He acts as a Servant, as it were, not speaking of Himself, but what He hears, *that* speaking. Whatever the means instrumentally used, this is the subject and the power. The Holy Ghost is faithful in this service. He must be so; for Christ is to be glorified. And this secures the witness of Christ's glory, in whatever measure, according to its faithfulness; this is the Church's delight.

In all this, the Holy Ghost is spoken of as being on earth, and being sent in lieu of Christ, who is gone on high, in distinctness of person: and the glory of the person of Christ, the great subject of the gospel, is still treated of in its aspect to the world who rejected Him, and the disciples who by grace received Him.

It appears to me, that the communication of the Holy Ghost, as noticed in the 20th chapter of this gospel, is as to the place it holds there of the character already spoken of. The whole of that chapter is a sort of picture of the dispensation in brief. It is not the Head and the body, but Christ in his personal title to send, as the Father sent Him; and giving them, in his risen power, capacity to execute the mission, the abiding essential service of those

now called to it, whatever measure of power it might be executed in. But Christ has not only gone to the Father, and been seated in the glory which He had with Him before the world was, and sent the Comforter, the witness of that glory, and the assurance to the saints of their sonship and fellowship with Him in it—‘his Father and their Father’—but He takes a place as head of the body (is its Lord indeed and source of supply, but also its head), and to receive for it that which He sends forth and ministers to it. Christ has a double character in this—Lord, and head of his body united to himself. But the Holy Ghost is, in all operations, from creation downwards, the proper and immediate agent.

As head of the body, the Lord Jesus displays the Church with himself in a common glory; but in all this He is spoken of as the subject of God’s power. (See Eph. i. 19–23.) And even where spoken of as Lord, still as a recipient and as made so: though while this is true, because He humbled himself and became a man, so that God also hath highly exalted Him, that He should have a name which is above every name, every believer finds the very basis of his faith in that He is the true God and eternal life.

The 2nd chapter of Philippians is the full statement of this great truth—this blessed truth (having all its value from his being truly and essentially God), that He humbled himself, that, as a man for our sakes, and as obedient to death, He might, as man, be exalted to the place of Lord, due to Him in

glory. As my subject is the presence of the Holy Ghost, I do not remark further on this passage, than that it seems to me a special contrast with the first Adam, who, being man, sought to exalt himself, and became disobedient unto death, or under death by disobedience; whereas the history of the second Adam is, that He made himself of no reputation in becoming a man, and death to Him was the highest, fullest act of obedience and confidence then, as man, in his Father: and therefore God highly exalted Him; such as sinful man was by his disobedience cast down, who sought to exalt himself and to be as Elohim. In this, then, we have the great doctrine of the exaltation of Jesus as the new man, the second Adam, the head of a new race—the depositary of power; in whom man was, according to the 8th Psalm, “set over all things.”

The divine power in which He could sustain it, and the title of Sonship in which He held it—for, indeed, He was the Creator—is not now my immediate subject. This point may be seen in Colossians i., and the double headship, resting on it, of creation and of the Church. At present, it is the connection of this with the gift of the Holy Ghost that we have to speak of. It is not, perhaps I need hardly say, as if there were two Holy Ghosts, or the Holy Ghost given were not so given at once, whatever the results: but that the place and power of the Spirit, so given, are distinct. In the one, He is the pledge and power of Sonship with the Father: in the other, the effec-

tuator of the Lordship of Christ, and the animating energy of every member according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and the power of unity to the whole body. We do, however, see that Christ risen, but not yet glorified, could communicate the Holy Spirit to them; though, till glorified, He could not send it down as witness of his Lordship. We have seen, that while (as individually blessing us) He fits the soul for the exercise of whatever gift is bestowed, he may bless in fulness of communion when no gift is in exercise—so that they are distinct; the former point, its connection with the apprehensions and enjoyment of the soul, being the difference of habitual *Christian* gift from the previous workings of the Holy Ghost: that, before it was put, “thus saith the Lord,” and individually the prophet might find he ministered to another. In the exercise of it by a real Christian, though he might minister it without actually realising it in communion at the moment—he ministers the things which were his own, and known as such through the earnest of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

I would now trace some of the scriptures connected with this point. In this the Holy Ghost is a Spirit of power, not a Spirit of Sonship; though, it may be, the sons, having the Holy Ghost, have the power, according to his will, by his presence working in them. This presence of the Holy Ghost is withal corporate presence, that is, his operation, though, as the body, it works by individuals, of course, but by

them properly as members of the body, working in power, not in communion. Consequently we see, if the gift was not available for the body (where the edification of the body was the intent of the gift), it was to be suppressed in its exercise, even though confessedly the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the particular gift of the Spirit was to be subjected to the title and rule of the Holy Ghost in the whole, as the member to the mind of the whole body, for the glory of Christ (though power was entrusted to the individual for that use of the whole body, for that glory), and the glory of the body with Him; for no power was rightly used out of the objects of the grace that gave it.

This train I have been led into by the first scripture I would refer to, Luke xxiv. There Christ is looked at as exalted in glory, and the world and all flesh alike here below. It is not there, "Go, disciple the Gentiles," as in Matthew; but repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, merely the first place here below amongst them. This commission Peter was accomplishing in his early sermons in Acts, though Paul carried out farther, as regards the Gentiles, not beginning, however, at Jerusalem. The word of the Lord in Luke was first, "Ye are witnesses of these things;" then, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in Jerusalem, till ye be endued *with power* from on high;" and afterwards He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

In the first sermon of Peter, we have precisely this:—"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." He then quotes the testimony of the 110th Psalm, and says, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The rejection of this testimony set aside the form of the commission in Matthew, in which Jerusalem was made the formal centre of organised evangelisation, according to her ancient standing, the Gentiles being treated as Gentiles.*

But the Character in which the gift of the Spirit is here presented, as given to believers and forming the Church, is very distinct. Jesus sends the promise of the Father. It is the same great common truth. But in what character is it sent? It is to endue with power from on high. It displays itself in exhibition in the first instance to the world, not in communion of sons with the Father—though, of course, the very same and only Holy Ghost which was the power of this. Its *primary* testimony is to the Lordship of Christ.

* It was only in grace she could have so stood; but grace had not put her out of this place till she rejected it for herself. I do not know but this point has been noticed in the "Christian Witness" by a brother already, but, because it unfolds the present subject, I do not pass it by.

We have seen the identity of the expressions in Luke xxiv. and Acts ii.,* let us observe the terms in which the Spirit, by the apostle, bears witness to Jesus.

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath *made* this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Now, in the whole of this passage, it is clear that our blessed and adorable Lord, who had humbled himself to become so, as we have seen from Philip-pians, is spoken of as man. As man He is made Lord and Christ. This we shall see to be directly connected with consequent operation and power of the Spirit, but yet not the whole of the principles connected with it. The corporate character of the scene of its operations was not yet developed. We have already, then, this first point distinctly brought out: the testimony, through the medium of the disciples, as the Spirit gave them utterance, to the Lordship of Christ as man, before the world. But whatever the rumour occasioned by the facts, the

* See Luke xxiv. 48, 49; Acts ii. 32-36.

word of preaching to the Jews is all of which the effect is related. They were to be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise was to them and their children, and to all afar off, even as many as the Lord their God should call. Whoever, then, received the word gladly was baptised, and there were added about three thousand souls.

The assembly of God was now formed, and the Lord added to it daily such as should be saved.

The testimony had been given to the world—beginning at Jerusalem, by these witnesses, chosen of God, to the Lordship of the man Christ Jesus. The Church had been formed by it, and then the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved—the remnant of Israel.

In this we see the operation of the Spirit, founded on the exaltation and Lordship of Christ, by chosen witnesses; *but antecedent to the Church, and forming it.* Of this character is all preaching.

When the assembly is gathered, then the Lord adds to it daily such as should be saved. The highest privileges of the believer are then known, in the revealed portion of the believer brought home to his new man, by the Spirit of adoption—the Holy Ghost given to him, the seal of the faith wrought in his heart by God.

The work of the Holy Ghost is then pursued in abundant testimony of Christ's power, proposing

(Acts iii.) the return of Jesus, and the times of refreshing on the repentance of Israel, the opposition and rejection of the testimony by the rulers, the disciples' confidence—his power, and blessing, and judgment within the Church—the determined opposition and rejection of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, and constant testimony thereto of the apostles as his witnesses: as is also, say they, the Holy Ghost which is given to them that obey Him. We have, then, (Acts vi.) the exhibition of the energy of the Holy Ghost providing for the circumstances even of partial failure in the Church. Then, on the renewed testimony, in his own prerogative power in Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost," the judgment of the Jews' rejection, nationally, of the Spirit is pronounced, and the Jewish history closed with that which introduced the Church, as so witnessing, into heaven, on its rejection, as full of the Spirit, in Jerusalem the centre of God's earthly system; and actually the spirit of the saint in the intermediate state there. "They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and with intercession for the unhappy people, as Jesus on his rejection, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Thus the Spirit, so acting, recognised the Lord Jesus; as Jesus, as the Son, had commended himself—his Spirit—on his rejection, to the Father.

This broke up, as has been frequently observed by those familiar with these truths, the earthly scheme and centre of the Church. Matthew's commission,

as has been remarked, in its original form dropped; for the Jewish people, by their rulers, having nationally rejected the testimony by the Spirit to the *exaltation* of Christ, as they had rejected the Son of God in his humiliation come amongst them as Messiah, Jerusalem ceased to be the centre from which the gathering power thereto was to flow.

Thereupon accordingly, the Church was scattered, except the Apostles. I would remark, in passing, on the very distinct manner in which the personal presence of the Holy Ghost is presented to us in all this history. Ananias lies to the Holy Ghost—tempts the Spirit. The Apostles were witnesses of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and so *also* was the Holy Ghost which was given to them that obey Him. “Filled with the Holy Ghost,” as the Lord had promised, was the power and source of their speech, as we see on every occasion. Thus the Holy Ghost as that other Comforter, present with them personally, was clearly before their minds. As the Son had been with them once, *so*, according to promise, the Holy Ghost was with them now. The Son had brought the love of the Father (now indeed yet more clearly apprehended by the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of adoption), and the Spirit now fully revealed to them the Lordship of the man, Jesus, who had been slain and rejected by the world.

But another great frame-work and form of the dispensation was now to be introduced.

Saul, through the instrumentality of a simple, dis-

ciple, Ananias, receives the Holy Ghost on his conversion, and begins to testify of Christ in Damascus.

The Gentiles then receive the Holy Ghost, and are admitted through the instrumentality of Peter. The reading of the 11th, 12th, and 13th chapters of Acts will distinctly shew what prominence this presence and power of the Holy Ghost held. There is, in addition, the service of angels, in the Apostle of the circumcision; but the gift of the Holy Ghost is just the sign of acceptance.

But in the calling and conversion of Saul a new and blessed principle was presented, as identified with that, to his mind: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" In a word, the unity and identity of the Church with Christ, of which the apostle thus called—irregularly called, as one born out of due time—became the eminent witness and teacher. Indeed, though there may be kindred truths in the other epistolary writings, we never definitively read of "his body, the Church," save in those of St. Paul. He seems specially to call it his gospel. In this (the *power*, in whatever form, of the glory of Christ, the knowledge of or unity with Him) the Holy Ghost is found to operate and unfold itself. Not clearly quitting the ground of the Lordship of Christ, but withal working as the power of unity in the whole body and diversity of operation in the particular members. In each, at the same time (for this *highest* and *most* blessed character of it, I need hardly say, was not lost), "the Spirit of adoption crying, Abba,

Father;" but this was a distinct individual operation, though of the same Spirit; a joy true to the individual saint, were there but one, though enhanced doubtless by communion, and which contemplated our joy with the Father, as sons along with the blessed Son of God, Jesus the first-born among many brethren.

The corporate witness of His Lordship and glory, and of the union of the Church with Him as Head over all things, is a distinct subject. The ground of this, *in union*, as well as the Church's blessing and portion by virtue of that union, is specially found in the Ephesians, and is there therefore looked at as regards the blessing and profit of the Church. Its administration, and, therefore, the general order of it in its principles and exhibition before the world, is found in Corinthians, the epistle which affords the apostolic directions for the management of the Church in its internal economy here below.

But before I enter on the formal economy of the Spirit, as presented in these chapters, I would turn to the doctrine of the word relating to it, as the ordinary portion of the Church in general, as there are one or two passages of Scripture which speak definitely of it in this light. The resurrection had marked out Jesus to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness. He might be of the seed of David according to the flesh, but He was the Son of God according to entirely another life, spirit, and energy. Of this His resurrection was at once the

proof and the glorious character; for it was triumph over death, of which, according to that life and holiness which was in Him, it was not possible (though he might imputatively take sin) that he could be holden. In this resurrection and power of accomplished and triumphant liberty—liberty of perfectness and sanctification of man to God in a new state of life, in which man had never been—He became the Head of a new family, the first-born from the dead, the Head of the body, the Church, having in all things the preëminence, and the Son, taking His place now, as such, in resurrection. Thus our justification became, in fact, identified with our position as sons, and as risen (*i. e.*, with holiness, according to its character in resurrection) before God as children. Therefore it was that, if the apostle had known Christ Jesus after the flesh, henceforth he knew Him no more; for he now knew Him in this character in resurrection, the Head of the new creation—the new family of God—the Second Adam, and so to us the quickening Spirit, when our living souls had spiritually died in the first Adam in sin—the head of a new family of men, with whom, in the close, the tabernacle of God should be.

The justification of the Church having been first reasoned out by the Spirit, the apostle turns to this; first as regards death and resurrection, in the 6th of Romans; then, as regards the law, in the 7th; *i. e.*, first, “nature” or “the flesh,” *in se*: then the operation of the law on the question into which spiritual

understanding and a new will brought the conscience:—and in the 8th he takes up the presence of the Spirit in moral operation and witness. Having stated the source of this mighty change and holy liberty, in “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (the breath of life to our souls being *the very same power* in which Christ was raised from the dead, and our partaking in all the consequences of that resurrection; God having done what the law could not do, *i.e.*, condemned sin in the flesh, *and that in atonement*, in grace to us), the apostle proceeds to instruct us what the *power* and the *character* of the Spirit in this new nature is.

It is the Spirit of God, as contrasted with *man in the flesh*. It is the Spirit of Christ, in respect of the form and character of this new man. It is the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead, according to the power and energy in which it works *full deliverance in result*. Thus its moral character and operation were unfolded, as a Spirit of power, and deliverance, and character IN us; in answer to the question, Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?

But there was also the doctrine of the relationship which we have in the new man, as well as moral character and power. As many as are led of it are sons; sons, and therefore “heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” And here the groaning is not on the question of what we

are *as to God's judgment of evil in us*, a spirit of bondage to fear; but, our own judgment of it *in its effects* because we *are sons*, and are *certain* that we are, and *know* that we are heirs. We take up the groaning of the whole creation, of which we are part, as in the body, and express it to God in sympathy, in the sense of the blessedness of the glorious inheritance when the creation shall be delivered; suffering *with Christ* in the present sorrow by his Spirit, and express it in the Spirit to God, even though we have no intelligence to ask for any actual remedy. In this, then, the Spirit has a double office: the witness with us, for joy, that we are sons and heirs, and helping us in the infirmities lying on creation and on us in the body; and when He, thus acting in us in sympathy, thus groans in us expressive of the sorrow, He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, *because* He maketh intercession for us ACCORDING to God.

The Epistle to the Galatians with less fulness teaches us the same truth, securing the foundation on which it rests. But we see, thus far, the sons joint-heirs—joint-heirs with Christ, and the Spirit at once the seal of the redemption which is accomplished, by which they have it; the witness of sonship in them, and the earnest of the inheritance which they have with Christ: known by the revelation of the glory of Christ and the things to come, connected with His person. Thus we have it expressed in Ephesians i. 9–14.

There is another very interesting passage as instruction upon this point (2 Cor. i. 20, 22)—“All the promises” belonging to Christ as heir—“All God’s promises are in Christ Yea, and in Christ Amen, unto the glory of God *by us*.” The promises are of God, and in Christ. God then establishes us in Christ; and then, for our knowledge, assurance, and enjoyment, we are anointed, sealed, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts; knowing it by the anointing, as in 1 John ii. 20—sealed, as in Ephes. i., and having the earnest in the heart so as to anticipatively enjoy the blessing known, and for which we are sealed.

Having spoken of this passage in a previous paper, I do not enlarge on it; but there is another collateral passage which I would not pass by, relative to the knowledge, communication, and reception of the revelations of the Spirit; shewing our entire dependance on that blessed Comforter and power of God for all knowledge of these things (1 Cor. ii.)—“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” Man’s heart never conceived them, but God revealed them to His saints by His Spirit. They had received the Spirit which was of God, that they might know. They spoke by words which the Holy Ghost taught: communicating, as I should translate it, spiritual things by a spiritual medium: and they were, more-

over, spiritually discerned; they were known, communicated, and received by the Spirit.

Having noticed these collateral passages, I pass on to the point of corporate operation of the Holy Ghost in the union of the body. The testimony to the Lordship of Christ, and that character of His exaltation, we have already seen in the addresses of Peter to Israel. This of course is never lost: but we have seen the additional truth of the identity of Christ and the Church—the very basis of Paul's special ministry, brought out in the question to the apostle, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" just as the sin of the first Adam was brought out by the terrible question, "Where art thou?" It is upon this that the grace of the ministration of the Spirit, now, was to have its course. The Spirit had borne witness by certain disciples; and the Church thereby had been gathered. The Church now was to be the vehicle for the testimony and witness of the Spirit corporately. The distinct revelation of this position of the Church, and its establishment in it, in the intelligence and actuality of its standing, began by the scattering of the assembly at Jerusalem, and by the apostle (having been called, and enabled by the Lord, and having preached at once—and thus laid by in a measure for a time) recommencing the work from Antioch, as a centre whence he was separated to the work to which Christ had called him, not by the appointment of Jesus after the flesh, but by the authoritative direction of the Holy Ghost in the disciples. St. Paul

had no part in the testimony mentioned in John xv. 27. It was only the Holy Ghost's testimony, and seeing the glory of Christ, and hearing the words of His mouth. Hence it was not a testimony to the exaltation and Lordship of Him whose companions they had been on earth; that God had exalted Him to be Lord and Christ there; but starting from the point of His Lordship seen in glory, that He was the Son of God, and a testimony and, of course owning it, to the union of the whole body, Jew and Gentile, with Him so exalted to God's right hand. Hence the operations of the Holy Ghost—always following the testimony concerning Christ, while still declaring and subservient to His Lordship—wrought in the unity of the whole body, according to the operations of God.

Hence we read in 1 Cor. xii., "Concerning spiritual things, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say, Lord Jesus—or, call Jesus Lord—but by the Holy Ghost." That is, whoever does so (*i.e.* in Spirit), does so by the Holy Ghost; for it was the *Holy Spirit* that testified that Jesus was Lord, not an *evil* one.

There were, along with this testimony, "diversities of gifts, yet not many spirits, but the same Spirit. And there were differences of administrations [minis-

tries], but the same Lord [not ‘lords many’—Jesus was Lord]; and “diversities of operations, but the same God [for the operations were truly divine] that worketh all in all;” there were not “gods many”—all were the operation of the one true God.

It is not the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) which is here presented to us, though from other scriptures we may know its connection with it, but God, the Lord, and the Spirit, working in the Church upon earth; though, lest we should suppose He was not God, it is afterwards said, “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

We have here, then, these two points,—the *Lordship of Christ*—and *that* taking its place as to the services of which the gifts were the power; and the *unity of the whole body*—in which, as by its members, the Spirit wrought according to their diverse appropriate functions. The operation being all the while God’s operation, but ordered according to the functions of the body, and the purport of the whole; for the members’ service was for the good of the whole body.

From this, I think, we distinctly learn the order

of the ministration of the Holy Ghost, as thus presented to us. What additional instruction the word may give us, we shall afterwards see.

First, there was the primary testimony that Christ was Lord—more correctly, that Jesus was Lord : that formed the great basis-truth. All was subservient to this. The Holy Ghost as in operation, though supreme to distribute, was subservient to this : this was the great testimony He blessedly rendered.*

He bore it in gracious faithfulness now, as hereafter every tongue shall be obliged to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Upon this hangs consequently the responsibility of every gift. We are servants by them to the Lord Christ : “Ye serve the Lord Christ ;” “Such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies ;” “Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ,” is the well-known glory and faithfulness of the apostle. It was to “the Lord, the righteous Judge,” he looked. Thrice he besought “the Lord” that his thorn in the flesh might be removed : “He that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.”

These gifts of the Spirit, then, set them in ministries to the Lord, in which they were individually responsible for their exercise to Christ—talents with which they were to trade ; but then they were responsible to exercise them within the body, accord-

* It is this, and not as touching the question of His divinity, makes the apostle say, “To us there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ.”

ing to the order in which they were set in the body, and in subjection to the mind of the Lord the Head of the body. This preserved entire *the full personal responsibility and liberty*; for no one was Lord but one, not even an apostle, and yet mutual dependance, healthful for all, even for an apostle; for the Lord's authority was great over the foot or over the hand, and as exclusive as over the apostle himself. Nor would an apostle, having still the flesh to contend with, keep his place unless this were carefully held. Though by preëminence of gift he might guide, lead, direct, and, by revelation from the Lord, give a commandment to the Church, he could not, in the smallest degree or tittle, touch the direct responsibility of the least member to Christ the Lord Himself; he would have been setting up himself as the Vine, as lord over God's heritage, had he done so. The apostles were alone as helpers of joy, and *that* by authority entrusted for edification, but never as lords over their faith. Authority, however, as a gift from the Lord, increased responsibility; but of this more hereafter. If he, the apostle, counselled any member by the Spirit, woe be to that member if his counsel was despised. Of course, if he revealed a commandment of the Lord, the believer became directly responsible to the Lord for obedience to that commandment. And though he specially, and the whole Church, might judge by the Spirit, still it was always with this remembrance—"another man's servant."

But it must be distinctly remembered, this was not

for private right or title in the individual. I recognize no such thing as right in an individual. Right, in the human sense of it, is some title to exercise his own will in man, unimpeded by the interference of another. Now CHRISTIANITY ENTIRELY SETS THIS ASIDE. It may be very speciously maintained by dwelling only on the latter half of the definition, because grace does give a title against the interference of another; *but that title is in and by virtue of responsibility to God.* No man has a right to interfere with any thing in which I am responsible to God. But the light which Christianity sheds on this is not my meddling with the will of that other, but my obligation to do the will of God at all cost:—"We ought to obey God rather than man." And having first done the will of God, then to suffer it; for it is better, if the will of God be so, to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing; for Christ, in the best sense, has once suffered for sins. If we do well, suffer for it, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. But this right in the individual, in the human and common force of it, Christianity cuts up by the root, because it pronounces the human will to be all wrong, and the assertion of its exercise to be *the principle of sin*; so that we "*are sanctified unto obedience*" as to "the blood of sprinkling." Thus the idea of all having *a right* to speak in the church could never enter into the Christian mind. It has no place in the scheme of Christianity, which begins its moral existence by the breaking down the human

will as evil. The Holy Spirit has the right, which He exercises sovereignly, of distributing "to every man severally *as He will*;" and hence responsibility subject to the purpose of the Holy Ghost in all. For the *manifestation* of the Spirit (which gifts are—they are not the Holy Spirit itself) is given to every man to profit withal. There is purpose in it, to which the power of the Holy Ghost is to direct the use of these gifts for the good of all, as this epistle clearly shews us. The gifts to men or in man (both are used—one refers to Christ, the other to those to whom Christ gives them), are not *the* Holy Ghost, though they be *by* the Holy Ghost, and hence are guided by the mind of Christ, for the accomplishment of which they are given. Thus to display the gift of tongues, or use it where there were none to whom they applied, is described by the apostle to be the folly of childhood; they were given to profit withal. So also the spirits of the prophets—the highest desirable gift—were subject to the prophets. The not seeing this, and confounding these gifts of the Spirit in man with the Holy Ghost Himself, has led to much and mischievous confusion. And it has been thought impossible that they should ever be restrained, or subjected to even apostolic rule—turning, as every departure from Scripture does, to the license of the flesh and human will, or the even worse delusion of the enemy.

The Holy Ghost Himself dwelling in the individual, and especially also in the Church as such, guides, directs, and orders by the word, the use of

these manifestations of His power in man, as He does everything else, I repeat by the word ; just as the conduct of one *led of the Spirit* is ordered and guided by the Word, the power of the same Spirit directing and applying it. It is this that maintains *responsibility*, whatever the power given, and, by that, unity, through the Holy Ghost, in the whole body ; for power being given, its exercise would be by man's will else, or it would not be in man at all. This was true in the highest instance, where error or failure could not be. When the Son of God, in infinite grace and counsel of wisdom, became a man, it was not to destroy responsibility, but to fulfil it all in absolute abstract perfection : "He became obedient." Even in working miracles He would not depart from this. He would not make stones bread, without God His Father's will. It was precisely to this the enemy (Satan) sought to lead Him—to what might be called the innocent exercise of will, and using His power for this. But He was perfect, and the enemy confounded. He was content to do God's will. He kept His commandments, and abode in His love. And if therein He, a divine person, could shew that He loved the Father, and in His suffering there was *a therefore* that the Father loved Him, still He blessedly adds, and this was His perfectness, "And as my Father hath given me commandment, so I do." And thus closed His blessed and perfect career, with this true word to the Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou

gavest me to do." Blessed Jesus! justly art thou glorified in all things—Our Lord!

This difference now, however, exists, that Jesus having taken the place of power—"all power given to Him in heaven and in earth"—His place is not merely the manifestation of perfect obedience in self-humiliation, but the manifestation of exaltation and power. But this, while it has altered the position of Jesus, and the place of His disciples, as vessels of this power, in the testimony of the Spirit of God, has in no way touched the principle of their responsibility, though its sphere may be enlarged by it; nor has it let in the principle of human will in the smallest degree, because *power* has been increased; but it has merely introduced the principle of that responsibility into the exercise of the power entrusted, whatever it may be, and connected it with the Lordship of Christ, whose servants they are in it, that they may minister it to His glory, in love and testimony to the world, and in the edification of the Church. And the Word affords the rule for the order of its exercise, as of all things else.

It is a *part of this responsibility and reference to the Head of the Church, not to "quench the Spirit," nor "despise prophesyings," be they the simplest, or by the humblest in the Church, as to mere circumstance, if God be pleased to use them.*

The title and the right are God's, proving them divine, and therefore good: the responsibility man's, and the gift only the occasion of responsibility in

that; the Lord Christ being He under whom it was exercised; and by that responsibility necessarily independent of others; for no man could serve two masters: but within the Church exercised according to the mind of Christ, of which the Spirit is the *power* in the Church, and the written word the guide and standard. It is in this last point the Scriptures hold a place, which in many respects the apostles held, that is, of revealing the mind of Christ. They cannot have in themselves the place of power, but they do contain the wisdom of God, and, as to this in the New Testament, the mind of Christ. We must distinguish this point of revelation. The other points of apostolic office may be spoken of hereafter.

There are some other points to be noted in this 12th chapter of Corinthians.

Having spoken of the Spirit, and the Lord, and God; the two first shewing the relationship and power of this service, the last making us understand that it was withal truly God's power and working; and then in the same language (that the divinity of the Spirit might be recognized, though in a certain sense taking the place of service, as acting in the subject-instrument of Christ's Lordship) ascribed the power and working to the Spirit: having cleared this point, the apostle takes up the subject in connection with the unity of the body. And here Christ, at least the body of Christ, becomes the subject of divine operations: first is rather the fruit of those operations; for we are by one Spirit bap-

tised into one body—thus is Christ. And the whole is spoken of as the subject of divine counsel; Christ only being the Head, and we in mutual dependence; but the whole sphere is looked at as a subject-scene of operations. It is not merely now, the Holy Ghost bearing witness by which the world was convicted, or individuals convinced, and the Church gathered; but “now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.” “God hath tempered the body together.” “God hath set some in the Church, first apostles,” &c. They were “the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

We have thus the operations of the Spirit of God formally established in the corporate unity of a body, in the various gifts of the different members, of which the Spirit itself formed the unity and the power; subservient to the Lordship of Christ, and therefore directing the Church by His mind, whether for its own edification in love or testimony to the world; God setting the members of this body as it pleased Him.

The control of the Spirit, as communicating the mind of Christ, over the exercise of these entrusted powers, is next brought forward—after stating the superior excellence of love to any gift. Love was, and witnessed, God, and was the bond of perfectness in essential blessing. These, the testimony of power; prevailing indeed over evil, but still ministered in the midst of it, and not to continue, therefore, but to pass away or cease. The use of these *for the purpose*

of love thus became the true test of grace and the mind of Christ in using them ; otherwise, turned into personal display. The edifying of the Church was to be the rule of all used there, and no individual title, for they were to follow the mind of Christ.

This also gave rise to a distinction in the gifts, of those suited to the world, and those meant for the profit of the incumbent of the Church. Thus "tongues" were a sign to unbelievers, not to the Church ; this was their use. One gifted with tongues was not therefore to speak in them, unless there were an interpreter ; for the Church would not be edified : it would by the subject-matter, if there were an interpreter. So "signs," or "miracles," confirmed the word.

The gift of tongues was peculiar, and characteristically evangelical : overreaching the consequences of man's sin and judgment in Babel, and setting aside manifestly the confining the testimony of God to the Jewish people ; constituting an active ministry towards those without, which was distinctively essential to Christianity. It thus became, distinctively, manifestative of the Holy Ghost, on the Jews and on the Gentiles (the 120 and Cornelius), as sent down, the witness of this grace, and of glory and Headship in Christ. Miracles had been wrought among the Jews ; even there, however, it was among it those departed from the covenant, or, when at first that national system was established. In Judea the prophets recalled to the law, and let their predictions verify themselves or be owned by faith. Their sum-

mons to the law required no verification; its obligation was acknowledged. But tongues were properly applicable to the Christian dispensation as acting on the world, and therefore became the characteristic manifestation of the Holy Ghost sent down as acting before the world that needed this.

“Tongues, miracles, healings,” then, might be exercised by those gifted thereto in the Church, but they were exercised as the witness of the beneficence of Christ’s Lordship to the world, and not towards the Church already alive in heaven by the deeper quickening power of that beneficence. This was their general character. The proper character of the Church’s blessing was edification:—“Let all things be done unto edifying;” or, as expressed in the Ephesians, “the edifying itself in love.”

This appears to me the true distinction: signs to the world, and edification to the Church, not that usually made between miraculous and not miraculous; as if God gave no positive gifts to the Church now, and as if *miraculous* were synonymous with *supernatural*, and that the Holy Ghost had ceased to act; and thus human powers are practically referred to as the sole agent in the Church. If miraculous be spoken of as meaning those which were signs to the world, I have no objection, provided the direct power and gift of the Holy Ghost be not set aside, in those which are not for signs but for edifying: otherwise great dishonour is done to the Holy Ghost.

There is this distinction given us in these gifts by

the fact of some being for signs, some for edifying; the former are to act on the senses and mind as applicable to those without; the latter on conscience and spiritual understanding, and consequently the subject of intelligent judgment and reception. This remark is of importance. The Spirit of God acting in the force of responsibility in us is always paramount to any means of power and gift—even if real; for, thereby the authority of God is owned and set up over ourselves. The true use of gift in the Church is just to enforce this: wherever it departs from this it is clearly false in principle. “I must judge them which say they are apostles”—“let the rest judge”—“the spiritual man judgeth all things.” Self-will, which refuses the enforcement of responsibility by gift, or which would use gift to exalt itself, instead of enforcing it, are alike the flesh set on by Satan to its own lawlessness. There is no remedy for this but grace, and the power and presence of the Holy Ghost condemning and mortifying the flesh in each. The want of this is recognised as possible, and to come, by the apostle:—“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”

I should also remark, that the Holy Ghost teaches us here, that while He distributes to every man severally as He will, and uses whom He will, so that all openness is to be maintained for His operations, there are distinct permanent gifts whereby men are constituted teachers, prophets, or the like, though

their teaching and prophesying may still be in constant dependence on the action of the Holy Ghost Himself. These directions, in fine, as to tongues and interpretations—the number and manner of prophets speaking—women speaking—shew the distinct control of the Holy Ghost Himself (thus in its order expressed in the word) over the exercise of all entrusted gifts *in the Church*, where the Holy Ghost habitually dwelt and guided for the end of edifying all. Liberty and guidance is characteristic of Christianity, and is distinctive of *power making willing*, and the wisdom of *God for us*.

This testimony to the world, and edifying of the Church, involves also another consideration, besides the signs wrought by the Church before the world—a principle of service a little modified by the position of the apostle Paul—that the operation of the Spirit in gift, though working in and by, precedes the formation of, the Church.

Gift of evangelising, though it be in a member of the Church, yet is clearly antecedent in its own character to the existence of the Church; for it is by that the Church is gathered.

The highest form of this was shown in the apostles at Jerusalem, as we have already seen. And though the Evangelist may go forth from the Church, and be aided by the Church, it is a gift exercised not towards the Church, or to its conscience, and of which the Church, therefore, cannot be properly cognizable. It must be exercised on the possession

of the gift, and bears its evidence in its fruits by acting in the primary work of God's Spirit on the conscience of the unconverted; judging it, not judged by it; coming in the grace and truth of Jesus to it. Other gifts, as prophesying, may convince others in conscience, but its exercise is *in the Church*, and the Church having a conscience taught of the Spirit, is bound—it may be through other prophets efficiently—but is bound to judge; but the Evangelist is to the world, and there is no competency of judgment, though there may be holy counsel and advice, as from the Lord. As aiding in grace, temporally, the Church, or rather each individual in it—be it a woman—is bound to have no fellowship with doctrine not according to the word, and the Church should take all needful notice of this, and not be partakers of this sin. The same would apply as to any evil practice; but the exercise of the gift, as such, in its nature, though it flow from the midst of the Church, goes forth *out of it*, and, not referring to its conscience, does not raise a throne of judgment *there*, which responsibility to God does, in what is addressed to the Church. The Evangelist is responsible to God for the exercise of his gift towards those without, and becomes *manifest in their consciences* in the sight of God.

The highest form of this was the apostles' on the day of Pentecost. It was a direct authoritative address, as the apostles of Jesus, appointed by Him, and ratified in power by the Holy Ghost to the

world, thereby forming the Church, and becoming in a certain subordinate sense, heads of the Church, to guide, regulate, order, and direct those whom they so gathered, which gave the subsequent character to apostolic office.

Thus *the evangelist* becomes, in a certain sense, independent of the Church, though *the man* be always subject to it; and though the ministry of evangelisation be in the Church, yet the Church is not properly missionary, nor the manager of missions. It is "a city set on a hill," formed by missions from God.

The sense of this position of the Evangelist I believe to be most healthful to the Church, keeping it in its place, and from assuming the place of God, as if it were the sender. It is gathered, and does not send; God sends; though, in love, those whom He sends may go forth from its bosom. This was clear in the first apostles. "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you," was the Lord's word to them.

But this was true of ministers of this character, inferior in rank to the apostles, and of the whole body when under this character—a character assumedly this, as "*scattered*," not "*gathered*;" as "*going*," not "*sending*." They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word, and the hand of the Lord was with them, and many believed. Nay, before this, Stephen (of whom we may perhaps say, he had gotten to himself a good degree and great boldness in Christ Jesus), full of the Holy Ghost, was mighty in the Word. Philip in like manner was

blessed in Samaria, which when the apostles heard they sent Peter and John to confirm the work ; but the work was done before even they heard of it.

This is the character, then, attached to evangelising in the Word. The weakening of it in individual energy will always weaken that, and the Church too ; for God will be independent of man, though he cannot be of Him, nor of his neighbour, in love.

I said this was a little modified in St. Paul, yet withal clearly sustained in principle. But he went out as one born out of due time—after the body was formed, in a certain sense. This, therefore, was recognised ; not in sending him, but in his going forth from it and returning to it, whence he had been commended to the grace of God.

The positive independence of his mission he is most careful to assert. “It was not of man, nor by man.” Immediately Christ was revealed in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles, he conferred not with flesh and blood, but straightway preached Him in the synagogues. Thus the character of this ministry was fully maintained.

But after a lapse of time Paul comes from Tarsus, brought to Antioch, and there for a year assembles himself with the Christian congregation, and teaches much people ; and then “the Holy Ghost,” certain prophets being there, while they fasted and prayed, said, “Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Thus, while directly sent of the Holy Ghost, they went in obedience to

Him, not to the Church ; they went from the bosom of the Church, commended of them to the grace of God for the work whereunto He had called them, and returned to the bosom of the Church. Not returning any intermediate reports indeed as responsible to them, for the true apostolic office would thereby have been detracted from ; but communicating, for the joy of all, what God had done through them. Thus, though it was not a gift exercised in ministry in the Church, its union with the Church was maintained, and the comfort of all sustained therein. The apostle became—authoritatively sent amongst those whom he had himself thus gathered—the apostle of the Gentiles.

I have said thus much of evangelisation because, though not a sign to the world, but a ministry flowing in the Church, it was still towards the world, and came in a special place in the distinction of gifts as for the world or the Church. It was, if I may so call it, a moral gift, *i.e.*, a gift acting on conscience, but not as within, but as that of the natural man. It is not actually mentioned in the gifts God has set in the Church. It is amongst the gifts which Christ conferred, on ascending up on high, for profit and the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ ; as are pastors also ; for the special subject of that epistle (Ephesians) is the love towards and blessedness of the body in its union with Christ, and consequent unity. Having completely redeemed it, and filled all things, it being His fulness, He minis-

ters from on high the gifts necessary for its advancement in grace, security from being deceived and led astray, and its self-edifying till it grow up into Him. This was not what the Church was to the world in display of Him, but what it was to and for Himself; though in *that*, in the number who had that gift, the evangelising minister of His love, as a helpmeet for Him in grace.

This is the real difference of this epistle to the Ephesians and the Corinthians. There the Spirit is looked at as present, and operating in the body generally, in the power of *God*—"as God hath set in the Church"—witness of, and subservient to, the Lordship of Christ, and therefore including that in which it was the witness of this to the world; and therefore the gift in its exercise is dependent in many respects on the competency of the Church by its state to stand as a witness, or the wisdom of God in so using it. Here (in the Ephesians) the state of the Church is not adverted to. It is not its internal administration that is the subject, but Christ's own love to His own body, His spouse; one He cherished and nourished as His own flesh, and thus cherished and nourished for Himself. Hence we have Christ, who loved the Church, viewed as ascending up on high and filling all things, giving the gifts; and it is said—not the Spirit works as He will in power, but (while the same unity is spoken of, though more of blessing than of membership) "to every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

This, then, is not the witness of the power of God above the flesh and its ruin, and the Lordship of Christ, but of the love of Christ and the ministration of that, and of the counsels of God, as to the place He has given the Church with Christ; it had, therefore, a more permanent character; for Christ's love to the Church is permanent, not resting on the suitableness of the medium to display power, but on the Church's own need of that gracious and tender love. This love, therefore, we may reckon upon.* I do not say that our faults may not hinder the manifestation of the love in plain and happy favour. Surely they may; still it is always in exercise.

Perhaps it may be said that the evil state of the Corinthian Church shews it was not a ministration of gift dependent *in any way on that state*; for these, so evil, came "behind in no gift."

It shews, indeed, that our patient God does not withdraw the honour conferred by His goodness at once on shortcoming; but the principle is exactly shewn by it. The Church, still in unity, though having failed in practice, is corrected by the apostle in all points, shewing the importance of the apostolic energy which still sustained it, that its safeguard was not mere primary position; but while it held its place, though falling into evil, it could be restored by that and all go right,—Satan not be allowed to

* For that very reason the extraordinary power of apostles and prophets does not continue—they were the foundation in that power—the word by them does.

get advantage after all. But still this was just the evidence, that the state and administration of the Church was in question, not the self-moved tender love of Christ to it, caring for it as His spouse; it stands in Corinth as the responsible witness of His glory, not the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. In Ephesians it is the blessed and holy privilege of grace, not the condition of the Church itself, which is in question as the ground and theatre of the display of Christ towards the world. It is what Christ is towards the Church, not what the Church is for Him, or what God has set it, in its Head and body, towards the world around it. It is "*till we all come.*" Hence, as the special personal care and love of Christ for the Church, it is not "the Comforter whom the Father will send in my name"—nor, "whom I will send unto you from the Father"—nor even members which God has set in the body subservient to the Lordship of Christ—but gifts which He, ascending up on high, has given, on leading the adverse powers captive. He who fills all things has given these the tokens of the nearness of His love. "That He might fill all things," and "He gave."

This, then, is the portion of the Church in Christ's love as caring for it, in the midst of His filling all things—as His body, the place of the manifestation of supreme grace. That which is given to the Church, not for His display of Lordship to the world, but the link of the Church as associated with Him, and to lift it up into heavenly places, and to form it in

spirit into all His fulness; preserving it from being frittered away in mind into various and strange doctrines, and ministering to its direct growth into the heavenly character and fulness of Christ. This is the character of these gifts here—the link and association with the heavenly fulness of Christ.

The Church is “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” But He is the head of the body also as exalted over all things *to it*. The anointed One is set in this place that He may, by immediate communion and gift to it, according to this anointing, associate it through the ministration of these gifts as His body into all this fulness. It is here, not merely the headship over all things to it, but the entrance into the *understanding* of His fulness as filling all things, as descended into death and ascended on high above all: and by the communication of the gifts as the anointed—the “Christ”—*then* entering into intelligently and spiritually as—though subordinately, yet really—associated and brought up into this fulness. This is the portion of the Church. It is a step above and more intimate than the witness, or even partaking of Lordship; though the sphere in which *that* is held. For indeed this fulness in Christ involves divinity; though fellowship with it be communicated by the anointed man, or, at least, the ministration of that fulness in gift.

He “filleth all in all,” and the Church is “His fulness;” but then this is spoken of one whom God—“the God of our Lord Jesus Christ”—has raised

from the dead; and this is just the connection of the Church with it. He is in the Father, necessarily, therefore intrinsically, Divine. We are in Him, and He is in us. All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him—as afterwards stated as to the fact, “In Him *dwelleth* all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” and we are *πεπληρωμένοι* in Him.

But in the passage immediately preceding the one we are upon in Ephesians (that in the end of chap. iii.), this is pursued more directly as to power *in* us; because the Colossians treats more of the fulness of the Head for the Church; this of the Church as the fulness of Him that filleth all in all—the corporate fulness, as His body, of Him that is head over and fills all things. We read of “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man—able to comprehend the length, and breadth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that we may be filled with (*eis*) all the fulness of God.” Thus the Holy Ghost becomes in us now the power and strength of this fulness. The second chapter had introduced—after stating access to the Father by the Spirit through Jesus for both Jew and Gentile—the additional truth that they were “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” This ground having been parenthetically unfolded in its fulness, in the third chapter, the fourth resumes the thread of the second, while taking up the unity mentioned in the first.

We, “strengthened with might by His Spirit, . . .

that Christ may dwell in our hearts," thus "rooted and grounded in love," "able to comprehend *with all saints*" the plenitude of blessedness and glory in divine counsel and fulness, and to know the love of Christ that we might be filled with the fulness. Thus we find it *in Christ*; known by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Thus this fulness of God is *known, even in Christ*, for so are we brought into it. And this is by power working in us, that we may enter into that into which we are brought. "Now unto Him . . . that worketh in us"—concludes the apostle—"be glory in the Church!" Now all this blessed fulness (of which the unity of the Church united to Christ is the centre and scene of development, while it extends to the whole sphere of the display of God's universal glory), in the love of Christ her head, is *ministered* to the growing up of the body by these gifts of Christ. They are the ministrations of Christ the head in the body. It is *His* gift—the edifying of *His* body—that they might grow up into *Christ's* fulness, of which we have seen the character just now. This gives us the character of the gifts. Here there is actually no mention of the Spirit, though doubtless the Spirit was the medium of power,* but they are given by Christ, who fills all things, that

* See chap. ii. 22, iii. 16. But the third chapter has brought it into union with divine fulness, and that as we in Christ so Christ is dwelling in us, and therefore pursues it here as of Christ ministering of and in the power of that fulness, to the bringing up of the Church into it in actual joy, security, and fellowship by these ministrations of it.

He may introduce the Church into His fulness; the Church in which the Spirit dwells. His fulness being the fulness of God—in Him all the fulness dwelling—and He filling all in all, and the Church His fulness.* It is then here, Christ according to this blessed fulness giving in love to His members, for the growing up into Him in all things who is the Head, till we all come to the measure of the fulness of Christ: not the display of His Lordship to the world (the Spirit acting as subservient to that display, divinely distributing, “God working all in all;”) it is Christ giving to the Church to minister on the ground of union—entrance into communion with His fulness!

I would now turn a little to the character of the gifts here spoken of; we shall see they are associated with this special character of giving to the Church, not witnessing by the Church. Having urged upon them, in individual lowliness, which the sense of the excellency of the calling would induce (a calling which had its existence in the unity of the Spirit, and therefore in the suppression of the flesh), to endeavour to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, the apostle proceeds to declare what gifts Christ gave (as *gifts*, nothing righteously to exalt) to man on *His* exaltation (that exaltation being of Him that first descended, and that into the

* The first of Ephesians presents specially the presenting to God of the saints; the third, Christ's dwelling in them, that they may realize His fulness.

lower parts of the earth), as now far above all heavens, so that He filled all things, captivity being led captive;—that is, the powers of darkness having the Church captive were now led captive themselves, so that Christ could freely communicate to the Church, so delivered, communion with His fulness, who in this act displayed how He filled all things, and accordingly gave these gifts for this purpose—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These I would now notice. It is to be remarked that all *gifts of sign* to men as such are entirely omitted, *all* that dealt with nature, and *all* even that merely dealt with the flesh in the Church; those only are mentioned that are initiative, and that edify in the Church. Thus miracles, tongues, healings, helps, and governments are omitted: apostles and evangelists, prophets, pastors, and teachers are introduced.

As to apostles, what has been observed will partly lead us to some distinction in this office. Primarily they are no part of the body properly speaking—they gather it. The house is built on them. Thus the twelve were sent as Jesus was sent of the Father. Paul was sent of the Lord directly. But in another character they had a place in it, in the continual exercise of their functions. In the former character they stood alone, save in one particular, which they possessed in common with prophets. But as authoritative regulators of the Church by revelation, they had a peculiar and definite place. In the one particular of revelation of the mind and will of Christ

and of God, the prophets might be associated with them; but these had no authority delegated of the Lord in their office as sent forth. The holy beneficence of this arrangement, I think, is evident. Thus while the Church was regulated and ordered responsibly and authoritatively by an apostle, yet they had to say, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." In this sense of revelation, as laying down the foundation, their work is complete and fulfilled. The word of God is written for us. The fruits of their authoritative regulation were left (as every dispensation had been,) in the responsibility of man, and men have entirely failed. But the revelation of the will of God is complete, and is there for us to refer to by the Spirit, according to the light of the word in our present condition, not by imitation but by obedience: hence tradition disappears; for at best that is imitation not obedience, a very important distinction, as will soon be found in its application.

But, moreover, it is clear to me that, in a subordinate sense, apostles and prophets had a place beside this. That the apostles expected no continuance of their functions is clear, for the apostle Paul declares the evil that would come in after his decease, and commends them to God and the word of His grace, and Peter says he will take care that they have the things in remembrance; and, indeed, one familiar with the New Testament will see that the character of the Church's responsibility is founded on the departure of direct apostolic authoritative care. The

Church could not leave it to them as the complete competent authority, who had communicated the Lord's will, and before whose departure the Lord began to act in judgment, if equally authorised communicators were constantly, with the same authority, present in the Church; the casting a dispensation on responsibility of a given deposit would have been entirely set aside, that is, the whole principle of God's dealing to the end, and the assumptions clearly taken up by the apostles falsified, and the Bible set aside by a constant succession of equally authoritative communications: for the principle of the office of which we now speak, is the authoritative revelation of the will of Christ.

We find then that, in one sense, apostolic ministry precedes the Church, the Church being gathered by it. Its character being, then, gathering by the authoritative revelation of the will of Christ, as the testimony to Christ in the power of the Spirit, whether by themselves or others, draws and quickens souls. Under this evangelists came, another testimony of their gift being of God, and that He could in His sovereignty communicate important parts of it to others; but apostolic service found its place also in the Church, where the participated evangelist's gift did not, that is, the regulating authoritatively the gathered, according to that revealed will.

But, as has been elsewhere stated, a new principle was introduced in and even before the apostolate of Paul, on the dispersion of the order of the Church at

Jerusalem, *individual agency* according to the energy of the Spirit, according to its measure, the operation proving itself and its own efficacy. So even the apostle of this owns: "The signs of an apostle were wrought in me:" "Make full proof of thy ministry:" "Let no man despise thee." Hence, though subsisting not in authoritative revelation of the will of God, nor power in the Church, yet in a subordinate sense, it seems to me that the gift of apostle and prophet has not passed away. Barnabas was an apostle. Junius and Andronicus were of note among the apostles: and it was praise to a Church that they had tried certain whether they were apostles, and they were not, but liars. Doubtless, these pretenders set up for the highest form of apostolate. But the Church could not have been commended for trying them, if there had been question only of the twelve and Paul. In truth, the word apostle, though now of definite force, has it not properly; it just amounts to one sent, a missionary. The messenger of the Church is called "your apostle" in the original. That which seems to designate the character of apostle, is the being directly sent of Christ, raised up to act on his own personal responsibility to Christ: not merely a gift exercised on such or such occasion subject to Church rules, nor the going forth with good tidings to sinners: but as one sent by Christ, acting from Him on his own responsibility to Christ, having a given errand and sphere in which to exercise his commission. In this sense, while the authoritative primary reve-

lation of God's will, gathering and regulating the Church, has clearly closed in the scriptural record to apostolic ministry, I do not see but that apostolic service may still subsist, and probably has been exercised, though the name may not have been attached; men raised up and sent by God for a certain mission, to effect a certain result in the Church or on sinners, though with no fresh revelation, but with a special energy in which to fulfil it, beyond the bounds of mere circumscribed gift as members within, but special in its relation to Christ. The faithfulness of its accomplishment, the mixing of other things with it, or the failure in clearly following in particular instances, does not, it seems to me, touch this question. In the same way, prophets, who were associated with apostles as the foundation, because they revealed the mind of God, may, it appears to me, in a subordinate sense, be believed to exist. It is not that they now reveal fresh truths not contained in the Word (or the foundation would not be completely laid—this, I hold, never can be touched), but that there may be those who not merely teach and explain ordinary and profitable doctrine—truths, and guide by the Spirit into present truth, but who by a special energy of the Spirit can unfold and communicate the mind of Christ to the Church, where it is ignorant of it—though that mind be treasured up in the Scripture—can bring truths hidden previously from the knowledge of the Church, in the power of the testimony of the Spirit of God, to bear on the pre-

sent circumstances of the Church and future prospects of the world, shewing the things to come, only that these things are all actually treasured up in Scripture, but they can give them present application and force according to the mind, intention, and power of God, and thus be *practically* prophets, though there be no new facts revealed, but all are really in the Word already : and thus be a direct blessing and gift of Christ to the Church for its emergency and need, though the Word be strictly adhered to, but without which the Church would not have had the power of that Word. This reference to that Word I hold to be the essence of the Church's safety, accompanied by acknowledgment of, and dependence on, the Spirit of God, the Comforter. The plain written Word, that of which it could be said, including now, of course, the New Testament, that *from a child*—scorned by some as knowing it in the flesh—thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. No tradition can in the smallest degree take the place of this : it is at best the certifying of men's minds as to the certainty of certain points. But see what the Apostle refers to in assuring them that they should see his face no more ; clear evidence, as we have seen, he thought of no apostle or successor to supply his place. "I commend you to God," says the blessed witness of Christ—that is the first great point : it must always and in a special manner, now he was gone, be found in Him

directly—"and the word of His grace, which is able *to build you up.*" This was exactly what was needed. Let a teacher unfold, a pastor graciously guide by, or a prophet apply in power, this word. This was what was able to build up and give an inheritance. Now, no tradition, however guiding, is a word of God's grace. It may direct the forms of man,—it may order the rules of the Church,—it might even record a form of correct doctrine: it is not the word of His grace "*able to build up.*" This makes, I trust, this point and the sense in which there may be, in a subordinate and inferior sense, apostles and (in a nearer sense to their original character) prophets, now clear. Revelation of new, unknown, and unrevealed truths being quite excluded, prophets, as expressing the mind of God, could speak, and did, to exhortation, and edification, and comfort, in thus applying the mind of God to the saints. So did the prophets of highest character of old.

These subordinate parts of the gift we see again participated by others, and diffused in the Church, that unity and deference for all might be maintained. He that exhorted was to wait on exhortation; and so one that taught—not necessarily a pastor—was to wait on his teaching, using his talent.

These might, in a certain sense (that is, apostolic and prophetic ministry), be called extraordinary, coming on special occasions and with special objects into the Church, though always witness of the goodness of God and for the glory of Christ. Evangelists

were of another character, the natural and constant testimony to sinners of the grace that was revealed in their good news of God in what we call the Gospel. Any saint had to tell it, but there were those specially gifted to proclaim the glad tidings. Timothy is exhorted to do this, in the midst of his care of the Church, for the Apostle. It is always in such case healthful, and a good sign, that we labour in the sense of the grace of Christ, and generally an evil sign when we do not. None can so deeply understand the basis of love without it. An apostle wrought in this work. The bearing on souls is understood by it: specifically, *grace* is felt and understood in the heart; we are on the ground our own souls have felt the need of.

The next class—for they are brought together as one—is pastors and teachers; for watching and feeding, and that with the word, are most closely united and identified; only pastorship includes guidance in holy wisdom and grace, and applying teaching to the state of the saints. We have seen the subordinate part of this distributed by itself—"he that teacheth on teaching"—but the gift here is guiding as pastor; shepherding and feeding the flock, applying the word in wisdom, watching against intruding heresies, building up by the word, guarding and securing from evil, guiding the feet of the saints into straight paths; in a word, the care of the saints. It is not here, as was remarked, government controlling the flesh, but the ministration of grace nourishing and cherishing,

guiding and feeding—some were “pastors and teachers.”

These were the ministrations; the first two (apostles and prophets) being, in their primary sense, the foundation—extraordinary; the last three (evangelists, pastors, and teachers), the ordinary abiding ministrations of the Church, to build them up in Christ’s known, and thus ministered, fulness; that the body of Christ might be edified, “grow up into Him.”

The primary and full object was the perfecting of the saints—their being formed and fashioned according to the pattern of this fulness and into it; but there was a formal and instrumental object as the medium of this. As to this, in its two-fold character, the preposition is changed, and the article omitted:—*“πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ,”* for ministerial work, for edifying the body of Christ. This ministerial work was clearly merely ancillary, and the edifying the body of Christ, for the perfect enjoyment of the fulness by the saints, *πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν*, is the direct and positive object; the other two were the service and form of blessing in which this object was carried on, and to which, therefore, these gifts were directed for the other, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God to full-grown men—to a perfect man—to the measure of the stature, in mind and in blessing, of the fulness of Christ, of which we have before spoken. That

we be no more children, nor blown about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, being preserved through these gifts of God.

This leads us to see the blessing and importance of these gifts, definitely committed by Christ, as He sees good in grace, for the good and communication of His blessed fulness to the Church; whereby, fed with what is good, it should be preserved and guarded against hankering after the false trash of deceivers. They are gifts to the Church, not to all, but for all. The development of these in full liberty and openness of ministry is most important. Nor can they be really or rightly developed otherwise. Hence God has commanded—made it a matter of command, and thus guarded the closing of the door by making it a matter of personal responsibility—that he that exhorteth should wait on exhortation, and he that teacheth on teaching; and, “as every man has received the gift, so minister the same as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” So “Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the people much at Antioch.” By this use of every gift in its place, as the apostle speaks, “the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,” and, “according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.” Still observe, these ministrations are all to the edifying and increase of the body, not to the external testimony of Christ’s lordship to the world. They

are the fulfilling of His love to the Church in ministering to it of, and so building it up into, His fulness—not the verification of the assertion of His Lordship to the world.

The only other reference of importance, that I am aware of, as to distinctness of subject, is in the book of Revelation, which I shall only briefly notice, because its character is quite different. In the first three chapters, the unity of the body ceases to be recognised, and the Spirit is not seen acting in the Church in the power of this unity, of which Christ is the corporate Head; but Christ is seen in a judicial though priestly character in the midst of the Churches, and the Spirit is a Spirit of address and prophetic warning to them, not of gift in them. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches." This might be gift in the apostle, but this is the character of the address; and hence every individual with an ear is called upon to hear for himself.

After this the Spirit is seen in His fulness in heaven, not in the Church; and is sent forth as the providential agent of the Lamb's power, as the seven Spirits of God sent into all the earth, not as the power of communion and gift in the Church at all. Thence it is seen as in the Church, as the bride directing her aspirations and desires after one object, the coming of the bridegroom: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come:" and this closes the whole scene.

I have now traced the operations of the Spirit individually as a Spirit of adoption, His highest and most blessed office in us. Then as coming paramountly to convict and guide, as shewn in John, as the Comforter sent.

This is traced, after the unity of the body with Christ is revealed in His corporate operations and character, first, as the witness of Lordship in Christ, acting in the members of His body in witness; then as the ministration of His love to His body for its growth up into His fulness: lastly, as a prophetic and judicial witness to the Churches themselves, thenceforward only in heaven as regards the Church in acting on the earth.

Such are the operations, as fully developed, of this blessed agent of divine power in us and towards the world. The chief topics, I believe, are noticed: I pretend to nothing more. Those who seek to search Him out, must do so by His own aid in the word itself; and may they, while dwelling on it here as a subject of thought, be led to refer to that Holy One Himself in His presence and personal power, as one who is with the Church—the Comforter sent—not merely resting in thoughts about Him, but led, actuated, directed by Him, and honouring Him as energised by Him in all things.

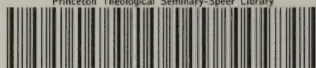
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